THE PLAIN VIEW

APRIL 1949

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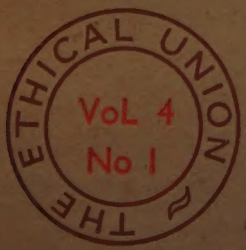

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Nothing is sufficient for him to whom what is sufficient seems little

UBERTATES ET COPIAE VIRTUTIS —CICERO

the productiveness and the resources of human quality

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION. —BACON

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V. IV

What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

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COMMENTARY

TOLERATION. Scepticism never yet made the world safe for toleration, and never will. Popular indifference is no reason for resistance to the imposition of doctrines and practices—it may find them rather amusing; and governments which have no reason to respect the private convictions of citizens and no serious convictions of their own have nothing to restrain their desire for uniformity in the interests of administrative convenience. Antiochus Epiphanes who on the basis of Hellenic scepticism proposed to make his motley kingdom "one people" let himself in for a riot of persecution and went mad. To descend from high policy to the humble level of domestic manners, there is the too familiar example of the believer in disbelief who finds it impossible to condone the offence of the mere disbeliever in belief. It is a pity that the Greeks hadn't a word for it, but Greek humanism in the famous account of Pericles (Thucydides) is too genial and too happy to find virtue or pleasure in an inquisitorial scepticism.

Political expediency is a firmer ground of toleration. When the battle of contending sects is exhausted in a draw, and despair of victory leads to an agreement to differ, toleration becomes an established interest, differences flourish and multiply, and respect for law and the rights of others is the most sacred bond of society. Yet when all must be openly its friends it may have secret enemies whose historical despair has not quenched the undying hope of eventual victory. Thus the constitutional neutrality in religion of the U.S.A. is necessarily accepted by Roman Catholics, but deplored; and Mr. Poynter in a book reviewed in this issue quotes from a Catholic authority this hypothesis: "Constitutions may be changed, and non-Catholic sects may decline to such a point that the political proscription of them may become feasible and expedient."

Only the profound conviction that the policy of toleration is right and good gives its practice dependable honesty and efficacy. What really is the case for toleration on this ground?

In general, everyone is born into a position in society and inherits a set of interests with which is bound up an outlook and a way of life. Therefore at the outset everybody is historically justified in his position. But, if this is so, nobody is justified in claiming universality for his position. Either he claims and accords respect as a matter of course for the position and culture into which a man is born, as would a member of an Hindu caste. Or else, if he pretends to universality, he must criticize, modify, and strive to transcend his inherited interests and outlook. This

will involve him in controversy, conflict, and negotiation with others, both of his own inherited way of thinking and of opposed ways; but always on the basis of striving for mutual understanding and definition of differences, if not for common interests and common views, never on the basis of an assumed and unquestioned authority and standing to which others are to be subdued.

Of course toleration is not toleration but mere indifference if it has no limits: one cannot tolerate nor wish society to tolerate views and practices which one believes to be wrong and evil; if one is serious in such a conviction one is bound to want to put an end to them. This is not to throw toleration to the winds, but to get down to the serious business of drawing the boundaries of toleration. In a political democracy, for example, the state does not proceed by force, nor allow anybody to proceed by force, against any view or person or party unless the person or party first resorts to force to impose some view or practice: the boundary of ultimate physical toleration is defined by saying that the sole justifiable use of force is to suppress the use of force, never to suppress views or persons not resorting or proposing to resort to force.

Fine discrimination, the recognition of differences which make all the difference, is of the essence of toleration. Doctrines and systems are not logical patterns laid up in heaven; in so far as they have any importance and excite any passion they inform men's lives or are instruments of their purposes, and under such aspects the same general systems may look very different: American Christianity, for example, is temperamentally different from Italian Catholicism; and in time Marxism in different countries is likely to develop specific differences. One is dealing, even in controversy, not with doctrines but with men, and what the doctrines they profess mean to them, the part such doctrines play in their lives, the use they make of them, is infinitely more important than the generic label, which may hardly mean a thing. The qualitative difference between two members of the same party or sect one of whom exercises his beliefs as the means of his imaginative and moral life and the other as the means of personal domination is far more irreconcilable than the difference between like-natured persons of opposed views. Truth is personal, human, and inscrutable, though not wholly unrecognizable. One can't have the slightest understanding of the matter and be content with labels, not try to penetrate into the opposing camps and find some of the human truth and quality there is always there. Even in the camps of utter intransigence and fiercest intolerance, Marxism and Catholicism, there is this human quality. But the arrogant claims of these systems cannot be tolerated. Nobody who understands

human life can consent to its being treated in this violent and destructive way. Absolute intolerance is itself manifest absolute evil. If universality is claimed and attained by conquest, there is nothing in it but the intolerable ambition of a minority to dominate.

Perhaps eclecticism is the clue to the intricacies of true feeling and judgement on questions of toleration. The systems and persons implacably hostile to any form of eclecticism are sterile and unsuited to the conditions of human life in the world. On the other hand, to think that all systems are very beautiful and to pick and choose agreeable ideas here and there, all that appeals to one in this or that, is a sentimental mockery of genuine eclecticism. The only person who is truly tolerant is one who has a position of his own to which he is committed, who decisively rejects the positions to which he is opposed, and yet knows how to understand them and learn from them, can appreciate their justification and find a place for them in his own scheme of things, and at the same time find personal friends near to himself in these alien positions. There is no neat theoretical solution of the problem. Toleration is a human question, a moral tension which all the time threatens to snap or run slack. But it is a moral tension essential to one's support if one is human and not mad. It is a comfort and source of confidence in concentrating on one's own line to know that others are thinking along different lines, have other sources of information and inspiration. No mortality, no life; no partiality, no truth: it is at that level of insight that one grasps the meaning and the importance of toleration.

LIFE WITHOUT REVELATION

ROUND about the age of four we all enquire into the origins of natural objects. As the first vivid impression of plants shooting in the spring, of flowers opening, of birds flying and of great trees abiding fill the mind with delight and wonder, so they fill it too with questions. "Whence came these things not made by man?" One simple form of the question is "who" made them. We must never forget that this remains a natural leap of the mind and an answer in its own terms remains one readily accepted by a little child. Answers in terms of natural processes interest, but leave the ultimate problem, "whence came the first seed or the first flower," vividly before the mind of one not yet habituated to the world. It would be easy at first to educate in terms of God. It is the harder way at first to show that we can learn more and more of

natural processes within the world but never solve the ultimate problem of its existence. If we do pursue this way it is important not to lose the sense of being surrounded by things no man can make. It is a curious fact that the idea that God made the rosy apples seems to express or add to the delight and wonder felt for them by many little children and they sadly relinquish or secretly cherish such a phrase once heard. Similarly about themselves, to know how babies are born of their parents never brings wonder and awed delight to the eyes of a child as does the magic of Blake's questions and answers to *The Lamb*:

"I a child and thou a Lamb,
We are callèd by His Name."

In discarding the conception of a loving Creator and accepting the limits of scientific knowledge about the evolution of the Universe, humanists shoulder the task of preserving and expressing in some other crystal way the sense that things are precious and wonderful beyond complete comprehension.

The question why certain things are as they are in the world is only called forth by those things which seem badly arranged, cruel, sad. No little child asks why there are tulips, but only why there are so many snails which eat the cabbages and have to be removed. No child asks why trees remain, but why flowers wither away; and if the natural cycle of life and death is pointed out to them they point to trees which do not die as to a superior and satisfying order of existence. It is an arduous discipline to accept that the question "why" has limited use. It may be possible to discover what conditions encourage snails on cabbages and what discourage them. It may be possible to discover what brings death to babies and so to prevent it. But ultimately our knowledge can only be of the world as it is, its processes and how to control them, not of why it is as it is.

"Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" is the question asked by Lear, already mad. It might be the question of one trying to follow the development of these hearts from the cradle to the moment when they reveal their hardness, tracing the interaction of the hearts as they come into the world and the experiences through which they pass, developing all the while. It might be an attempt as between one human being and another to understand. It might also be a question asked beyond the limits of such understanding: "What gives rise to hearts of such *inexplicable* hardness?" This question is asked at times by those who have witnessed satanic evil. The only answer for a

humanist is simply to widen our conception of human nature to include the most extreme and incomprehensible evil, whether we can fully "understand" it or not. But some not wedded to the limitations of thought accepted by humanists are led to believe in the Devil to explain the incomprehensible depths of human wickedness.

Imagine the question framed: "Is there any cause in nature that makes these *loving* hearts?" Then too it might be a question asked up to the limits of understanding, to be answered after wide and careful observation, in terms of heredity and education or experience. But it might be asked beyond the limits of understanding: "How comes the universe to include hearts capable of such love?" For some of us the knowledge that it does, silently subdues speculation, leaving wonder and thankfulness in its place.

If the evidence suggests that a process of "emergent evolution" filled the gap between hot whirling gas and hearts that can be hard or loving, we readily accept that account of the evolutionary process, knowing with perfect simplicity that it does not explain the primal existence of the whirling gas or the emergence of life even when conditions were suitable for life as we know it, nor the emergence of human "hearts." The supremely important thing for us is a knowledge of what human beings are like and capable of and of what the non-human world is like and capable of. At present we are greatly troubled by doubts about what human beings are like and capable of.

Certain tremendous alternatives we know, however, are possible to human beings. A little child may grow up in confident, spontaneous, loving, happy contact with parents, brothers and sisters, friends and teachers. Such a child has moments at least of spontaneous participation in and concern for the happiness and distress of those with whom it is in contact and, by analogy, even of those about whom it hears. Such a child easily comes to see that others really have a claim as good as its own to share in good things and that it has as great an obligation as anyone else to share in tiresome things. It accepts justice not only grudgingly as the solution of conflicting desires, but even sympathizes with the legitimate desires of others to a share in good things and no more than a fair share of unpleasant things. There will of course be moments when some strong desire to have the swing indefinitely swamps all other considerations, but if a child is also basically in a relation of goodwill and happy sympathy with those about it, it really feels the claims of justice within itself. Sympathetic consciousness of the claims of others has to be strengthened at such

moments and gradually raised into an approved principle modifying and directing conduct—checking impulses at times and suggesting positive lines of action. It is a severe discipline not to push away considerations which make us feel we cannot do just as we had been feeling it would be lovely to do—to remember an old friend with no one to play with when we have just made a new one. But imaginative goodwill springs spontaneously from happy open contact and from it spring all the tiresome considerations. Morality begins with the approval of these considerations, with the conviction that these things should be considered, that our actions should be shaped by sympathetic consciousness of all those we might affect as well as of our own desires. This leads on, of course, to considerations of what is necessary to sustain an ordered social life within which all have a chance to live out their lives, whether in a home or nation or the world. People whose lives are thus shaped by justice rooted in sympathy continue to be self-centred inevitably, but they carry within themselves the germ of free, spontaneous public spirit and care for others, as a creative, cleansing purpose of their own. It provides the ground for restraint and sacrifice. They see that all men should be constrained by sympathy and justice, that the will of each should be modified or directed by consciousness of all whom he affects or might affect. This makes them see others as creatures to challenge and respect as well as care for. Human beings appear as under obligation.

This vision and this conviction become the more compelling when the alternative courses of human development are considered. A child may grow up allowed to feel that its own desires are paramount and that other people are largely instruments through which to satisfy its cravings, or else obstacles in the way. Another child grows up feeling unwanted or perpetually opposed, so that it must fight for attention and grab what it can get in a hostile or indifferent world. Other people tend to be rivals and enemies, mistrusted and hated. Self-assertion, conflict, mistrust, resentment, hostility, cruelty, and cynicism grow inevitably where there is not happy contact, sympathy, justice. If men are not friends they tend to be enemies. If they cannot work together they tend to work as rivals. If they are not kind to each other they are cruel. If they are unable to trust each other they must mistrust each other. Without justice rooted in sympathy they must produce some sort of hell.

If we perceive that there is a very much better and very much worse life possible for human beings, there remains a problem how far any of us should be treated as responsible for how we live. Anyone who sees that human beings ought to stand in relations of sympathy and justice to each other does see all human beings as

under an obligation; he sees everyone as a moral being to be challenged and respected as well as considered and cared for. It is important to realize that psychologists both in theory and practice accept the possibility of loving sympathy with other people, but the stupendous verdict of those concerned above all with children, both in England and Germany, is this: "unless we succeed in making 3-4 year old children lovingly feel with others, we are unlikely to succeed at a later age." That is not too shattering a verdict, because there is no age at which a little child is more likely to feel love, to consider and reflect than at the age of 4. At about 4 years old there is undoubtedly a first fine flowering of our spirits. There is a sensitive freshness of perception, a capacity for genuine reflection which may fill a grown-up person with wonder for the human spirit almost more overwhelming than that felt for any mature manifestation. The terrible thing is that we may *prevent* a little child from feeling lovingly with other people before the age of 5, and so may cut it off from love and public spirit for ever. But so long as a glimmer of that "feeling with" remains, the root of moral responsibility, moral experience, is in a human being. It can be both cherished and challenged. We have to cherish and challenge it in ourselves.

It is quite clear that people who have the creative purpose of making a bad situation better and of rousing a sense of responsibility and care in those who lack it, can cut themselves off from merely hostile and negative reactions. Even to prevent a bad situation from deteriorating we have to have such a creative purpose. It forces us to see ourselves and others as potentially able to play our parts in a better situation so that we approach others with both goodwill and a challenge. Instead of contributing to a chain of hostility we break the chain. It requires a realistic, well-grounded faith in the response we may call forth, but also a final element of devotion to the better rather than the worse which commits us ourselves to creative effort and so to freedom from mere resentment or disgust, even beyond hope of response. Such people are bulwarks against cynicism and despair. Through them others sometimes regain trust and goodwill and take creative effort upon themselves. The person who does not turn against those who are cruelly putting him to death is only the extreme example. This type of creative goodness is called for on every hand in a world shot through with sloth and rivalry, callousness and resentment. The goodness of a good member of a happy family is not enough.

It is wholly unrealistic to hope for a Utopia here in this life we know. Society is bound to contain the conflicting claims of multitudes of self-centred persons and groups of persons who never all or

wholly surmount their self-centredness. Every baby is born with the whole process of developing in sympathetic contact with his fellow creatures afresh before him in a world full of imperfect persons and situations. But the difference between a better and a worse home, a better and a worse state of society, never leaves us without a goal. To tip the balance between better and worse here to-day, to contribute towards tipping the balance between better and worse to-morrow, are motives so overwhelming, experiences so all-pervading, that life seems hardly to hold room for more. Faith in a fulfilment "outside history" is something inexpressibly foreign to the whole life of a person who seeks to understand the ways and wonders of the given universe and how humanity should live in it. It is hard to come to grips with the concept of another life. One can only say that mind and body seem inextricably interlocked and that the interactions pass all comprehension. There is nothing "crudely" materialistic in not imagining that a human spirit survives the death of its body and with it all functioning in the only realm of experience that it or we have known. When confronted with death we feel acutely that the person was not merely a living body which now is dead. In the concentration of the moment all that the person was may become more vividly present to us than in daily contact. Awe is the usurping emotion in the face of death. It is not lessened if this is felt to be the end. Some of us crave perhaps to end existence as in a moment of dissolving beauty and love which ends duration, from which we never need go on. In so far as we cannot be dogmatic in our unbelief we can only say we live without belief in immortality or any fulfilment outside history as we live without belief in God.

The inner life of man has been thought of and shaped by and expressed in terms of a relationship with God for so long that we who live in other terms have with the arduous care of an original thinker to find the terms through which to express ourselves precisely. We have to seek the terms with which to think of our own experience, in doing which we shape it. It is often assumed that if man does not commune with God, then there is for him no everlasting fountain of spiritual refreshment. But people do gain clearer vision of the thing they ought to do by contemplating the whole situation with minds open to feel the claims upon them and with wills prepared for reasonable sacrifice. People do receive fresh and confirmed purpose by looking once again in this way at the situation before them. This confirmation of purpose brings calm and courage, wholeness and harmony. This releases nervous and physical strength. In some such ways we may be freed of jealousy and resentment, frustration and desire. Again we may turn from a

trying task or relationship to feel once more conscious of all the things which are good in human life and are potential in ourselves and others. Solitude itself is potent, a necessity to some in due proportion. The human spirit *is* a springing fountain if we know how to let it play.

What needs to be expressed by humanists is the element of passivity in our spiritual life. We are only partially masters of ourselves. We may lie down to sleep but sleep "comes." We may withdraw into solitude but peace "comes." We may try to feel the way we ought to feel but sweetness and light "break upon us." These experiences awaken thankfulness rather than self-congratulation. But it is such thankfulness as we feel for sleep. We are such beings that we tire and sleep and wake refreshed. We are such beings that we expend energy and eat and our energy is renewed. So there are processes of the spirit which should not be neglected.

It is particularly said that we can find no release from the burden of guilt except in terms of that relationship with God who forgives the repentant. It is true that our guilt is something not wholly met by human forgiveness. We may, for instance, sin against a very young child. The final problem is always our own feeling about our guilt, though the forgiveness of one we have injured helps by restoring happy contact with that person and giving us a fresh start in that relationship. But it is inadequate to think only of being forgiven by those we have injured. Our sin lies in having ever committed the wrong action, and from that horror at ourselves, which prevents us from going forward with our minds free for creative goodwill, we must recover.

The secret of recovery is to give ourselves up wholly to that disgust with ourselves, in the knowledge that it is *right* for us to start afresh. We must turn our minds to learn from our experience, to understand others on account of it. Any thought which leads us back into active fellow feeling sets us free from the self-centred though essential moment of self-condemnation. To tell someone else may be an essential aid, and that person's function then is to help to set us free to carry out the duties that lie ahead. Very often we know that we are almost sure to sin in the self-same way again, but even so we must face the future with a free creative spirit, determined to go under and over and round and through our carelessness, our hysterical outbursts, and keep in loving touch with those we injure. To turn from our wickedness and live, to make a fresh spiritual start is our simple duty, in which all should help us. But the feeling that at last the oppressing horror at oneself has fallen

away to be replaced by creative love is one of those experiences which fills us with bounding thankfulness.

The whole conception of ourselves over against the grace of God is one which appears untenable. The whole working of our minds is beyond the direct control of our wills. The simplest functioning of memory is so mysterious, that at the right moment we do remember to do what we were supposed to do. Any artist or thinker knows the limits of his conscious control and the point where he can only be thankful that his mind was filled with ideas and images, with words or sounds and shapes. And when we suddenly feel deep tender contact with another, whence does it come? Who could draw the line between our "unaided selves" and God? The assumption that some part of what emerges in us comes straight from a transcendent Being is a quite arbitary dismemberment of the spiritual life and one extremely hard to substantiate. Humble thankfulness for spiritual gifts is on a level with the gratitude the sleepless feel for sleep, from which flows the quiet nerve, the capacity for love to flow in happy strength.

Humanists must develop their own experience of spiritual life and give it full and positive expression. They must not acquiesce in that very inexact and suggestive phrase about "man unaided." Not to believe in special supernatural grace does not involve proud self-sufficiency nor any more optimism than is contained in the belief that man can draw upon supernatural grace. There is room for more or less optimism within a theory of supernatural grace coming from a Transcendent Being and within one which attempts no such explanation.

Humanists should recognize that the right spiritual development is something which must be actively nurtured. This is very largely recognized by secular educators. But it very often or usually stops short of admitting the need for sustained or recurrent seeking by the individual of enlightenment and renewal. Still more does it stop short of admitting the need of the individual to feel that this is a need shared by all his fellow men and that the duty to fulfil this need is one he shares with all his fellow men. Such withdrawal for enlightenment and renewal must be socially recognized as a basic duty, so that people are encouraged to take time and enabled to find quiet. Moreover, under the pressure of daily life the existence of a place to which other people also go for this same purpose at a given time, may be an incalculable help even to those who find in solitude their deepest experiences. Even to know that at this level of experience there is something regularly being done by people who think of life as one does oneself and that one can leave one's

work and one's household and go there is a tremendous help at some periods of most lives, if not all the time in all lives. Moreover, the individual is very handicapped in making contact with others, even his own children, if there are no common expressions of his convictions and spiritual experiences. We need groups that hammer out common expressions of essential experience and become aware of common and supplementing experience and thought. It is because humanists have neglected all this that there is considerable truth in the allegations of theists that we live on Christian capital and let the young drift. It is because of this that in fact most vaguely unbelieving parents allow their children to be brought up vaguely Christian in thought outside the home. Nothing could make for ineffective vagueness more than this. We must lay hold of our convictions and our deepest spiritual experience and make a great positive tradition, something within which we can all grow up.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

I

THE first interest of Marx is capitalism, not socialism. The phrases of the *Communist Manifesto* ring with admiration in depicting the brutal materialism and irresistible energy of the bourgeoisie in action, thrusting themselves into history, sweeping aside the effete persons of place and privilege in Church and State, expropriating peasant and artisan, putting all their drive into the business of organizing their own interests, compelling the world into the path of progress. For in this phase of social development this is the historical class playing the progressive role, master of the new sciences, the new techniques, the new machines, the new men; and at this stage socialism or communism is as futile, as reactionary, as attached to idealism as the dream of restoration which consoles the dispossessed. But, as Engels says, the eyes of the dialectical philosopher see on everything and in everything the stamp of inevitable decline, and look for the newcomer which will rise and thrust it aside: the present power is always engaged in establishing the power that will destroy it; "not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians." In time, Lenin will concentrate in himself the audacious self-confidence of the early bourgeoisie and drive their

class from power, establishing in their historical role the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This dramatic spectacle of capitalism in expansion was merely a graphic summary of events which in detail had a different aspect. In France, for example, throughout the 19th century it is the anarchy of capitalism rather than its efficiency that demands attention: the feverish speculation, the tariff campaigns of rival interests, the struggle for spoils, the exploitation of the powers of the state for private fortune making. These conditions are reflected in French economic theory, which is rich in socialist utopias, by contrast with the classical British theory of an automatically self-regulating "natural" economy. Saint-Simon proposes to organize capitalism: the new order of production requires an appropriate social order, a technocracy. Fourier dreams of regenerating society by model collective farms. Proudhon wants small-scale co-operatives and the elimination of all forms of income without work. These systems are strong in their protest and rejection, their analysis of the economic waste and moral evils of capitalism. They do not capture the interest of those who are profiting by the existing anarchy, and they cannot long appeal to those who are victims of it. These (workers who feel themselves cheated of all gains in successive revolutions) gradually come to accept the view, propounded pre-eminently by Blanqui, "the head and the heart of the proletarian party in France," as Marx described him, that it is private property in the means of production that is the source of anarchy in production and of arbitrary power over the workers, and that it is by using the power of the State that the owners maintain their privileged position and exclude others; with the result that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between the two classes which can only be resolved for the workers by the conquest of political power and the institution of a revolutionary dictatorship on the model of the jacobin dictatorship of Robespierre, which Babeuf had hoped to revive in order to "withdraw the people for ever from the natural enemies of equality and give them the unity of will required for the adoption of republican institutions." Blanqui's thought has travelled from this earlier ideal of republican institutions to the question of economic power, and for him the object of the dictatorship is the collective appropriation of the means of production by the workers, and the crushing of every attempt by the counter-revolution to regain possession. This was communism as it took shape in France, disengaged from the confused aspirations of the great Revolution, sharply opposed to utopian socialism, given impetus and operational clarity by Blanqui, for half a century head and heart of the proletarian party, and born and bred to conspiracy.

agitation, and insurrection. Nevertheless, French communism is not "scientific socialism"; it is an improvisation on a theme of the Revolution. In a phrase of Blanqui's it is "the marrow of the Revolution," for experience of successive revolutions had taught him to regard the class interests of all sections of the bourgeoisie as a betrayal of the Revolution, and the socialist utopias as new religions no less reactionary than the old; only the proletarian class was a dependable instrument of revolution and social regeneration.

II

The practical conclusion of the revolutionary agitator Blanqui, his operational conception of communism as the dictatorship of the proletariat, could hardly have gained universality without the theoretical elaboration of Marx, whose economic and historical analysis issued in the same conclusion. Marx tried to show that capitalism, having created the proletariat by expropriation, appropriated in profits the use-value of its unpaid labour. This was not merely injustice, wage-slavery, exploitation; the worst consequence was that within the limits of the home market the system entailed the contradiction that it could only persist by selling to people who had not the money with which to buy: hence, booms and slumps, monopolies, wars, and crises of unemployment threatening chronic stagnation. The capitalist economic expansion would inevitably lead to a world-wide struggle for an increasing share of diminishing trade returns, accelerating the contraction. (And in the 1930's this happened.) Private property in the means of production constituted not merely privilege in consumption but also arbitrary power in the disposal of resources. Only the proletariat had no interest in private property in the means of production and could reconstitute the general interest in full and planned production by abolishing this form of private property. But the instruments of government were in the hands of those who enjoyed and would defend privileged relations to the means of production. Therefore, revolutionary action establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat was the only means by which the full productive capacity of the economic machine developed by capitalism could be realized. This conclusion was theoretically inevitable, since privileged relations to the means of production by definition constitute interests at variance with the common interest, and since these privileged interests are solely interests in profit-making, that is to say, interests sometimes satisfied in expansion sometimes in contraction, without regard to unsatisfied human needs. A society constituted of consolidated privileged interests has no common interest, and a common interest can only be created by the class which has no

privileged relation to the means of production, the proletariat expropriated by capitalism. The intolerable waste, anarchy, oppression, and misery inseparable from the capitalist system cannot be cured by economic reforms because these evils flow from production for profit, in which everybody is interested except the proletariat. The task of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to put everybody on a footing of equality in relation to the means of production, thus creating a common interest in full production, and then to plan the allocation of resources and the programme of work. At first Marx thought that capitalist economy would ripen into monopolies in the hands of a few and that a change of hands would be all that was required, that the proletariat representing the immense majority could take over and run the State and the economic machine. Reflection upon the course of capitalist development and the course of class conflict, especially in France and especially as seen in the experience of the Commune, convinced him that it would be necessary to reconstitute the armed forces and the administration. Blanqui's political programme, summarized by himself in two words "dictature parisienne," meant simply the disarming of the bourgeoisie and the arming of the workers. The Commune, first sketch of the proletarian dictatorship, proved to Marx and Engels that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes" (Preface to *The Communist Manifesto,* 1872). Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat has to "smash the bureaucratic-military state machinery," and its regime will last "an entire historical epoch."

"Scientific socialism" is this analysis of the necessary consequences of production for profit based on privileged relations to the means of production. All other forms of socialism are utopian (unless the mere mockery of opportunist Labour leaders) because they have no roots in effective class interest and because they seek to gather grapes off thorns. The rational allocation and full employment of resources inexorably require the abolition of private property in the means of production, which inexorably requires the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is not open to anyone to prefer the inconveniences of the present if he dislikes the means more than he desires the end. There are no alternatives. Communism is only secondarily an object of will, it is primarily the necessary sequel to capitalism, the continuation of capitalism at a higher level. It becomes an historical necessity when the proletariat becomes conscious of the necessary failure of capitalism, of the indispensable conditions of full production, of their own class interest and class power. It is made inevitable by the convergence

of economic and psychological laws, and for that reason the consent or dissent of individuals cannot alter the issue, as variation in the behaviour of individual units does not affect statistical regularities.

This operational definition of communism as the condition of society created by the dictatorship of the proletariat distinguishes "scientific socialism" from every other form. In practice it presupposes advanced capitalism and a class-conscious organized proletariat; in theory it presupposes the whole content of Marxist thought. There is no Marxism apart from it. On this view, socialists who are social democrats are no more able to play the historical role of the proletariat in realizing the productive capacity of a machine economy than are the bourgeoisie themselves whose part is played out and whose tools they are: their action merely confuses the issue and delays the *dénouement*. Stalin remarks of the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat: "To think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which is adapted to the rule of the bourgeoisie, means that one has either gone out of one's mind and lost normal human understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiated the proletarian revolution." Marxism is not concerned with socialism as a theory or ideal of society, but solely with the dictatorship of the proletariat as the inevitable next step in the economic organization of society. What the dictatorship would do could be left to take care of itself because it could be trusted to deal with the economic conditions which made it necessary; for the rest, the economic order was the source of all things in any society.

Thus Marx says of the working class, with reference to the Commune:

> "They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par decret du peuple*. . . .They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which the old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."

He sums up the content of the programme thus: "The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence." As to the dictatorship itself, he says:

> "Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour." (*The Civil War in France*).

Lenin underlines "at last discovered" in order to contrast Marx's historical approach with the inventions of the utopians.

> "And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of the failure of that movement, in spite of its short life and its patent weakness, began to study the political forms that it had *disclosed*. The Commune is the form 'at last discovered' by the proletarian revolution, under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour" (*The State and Revolution*).

Theoretically, it is the observed verification of the Marxist hypothesis; historically, it is the establishment of a second and greater precedent, to be repeated, as Lenin noted, in Russia in 1905 and 1917. Similarly, Engels in a letter to Bebel commenting on Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* rejects the idea of socialist society as the realm of "liberty, equality, fraternity," and all the ideas of the socialist schools, "for they only produce confusion in people's heads and more precise modes of presentation have been found." This more precise mode instead of presenting socialism as turning principally on distribution and treating distribution as independent of the mode of production (which according to Marx is vulgar socialism and liberalism derived from bourgeois economists), is "scientific socialism, which does not attach great importance to distribution and which explains the social system by the organization of the *relations of production* and which considers that a given system of organisation of relations of production already includes a definite system of distribution . . . this idea runs like a thread through the whole of Marx's teaching"* (Lenin).

Lenin elsewhere sums up the approach of Marx to Communism in this way:

> "The whole theory of Marx is an application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, well considered and fruitful form—to modern capitalism . . . Marx treats the question of Communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological species, if he knew that such and such was its origin, and such and such the direction in which it changed" (*The State and Revolution*).

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*Lenin in another place says that the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat runs like a red thread through all the teachings and all the works of Marx and Engels. Indeed, this is true, and on the two "threads" twined together hangs the whole weight of Marxist thought.

The same operational approach is seen even more strikingly in Blanqui just because of his deficiency in theory: he has a blind apocalyptic belief in "creative" revolution, and left blank even the first steps in the construction of Socialism.

> "The social question can only come into serious discussion and into practice after the most energetic and irrevocable solution of the political question, and by that means. . . . Ideas of social reconstruction will never have any reality until a cataclysm striking dead the old decrepit society will set free the imprisoned elements whose spontaneous and rapid germination must organize the new world. All the powers of thought, all the stretching of intelligence will not know how to anticipate this creative phenomenon which will only appear at a given moment. One can prepare the cradle but not bring to light the awaited being. Until the moment of death and rebirth, the doctrines which are to be the foundation of the future society remain vague aspirations, remote and nebulous views. It is like a silhouette formless and floating on the horizon of which no human effort can fix and grasp the outline. There also comes a time when discussion is exhausted and does not know how to move a single step towards the future. In vain it tires itself to lift a barrier which thought cannot cross, a barrier which only the revolution will be able to break. It is the mystery of future existence whose veil, impenetrable to the living, falls of itself before death. The old society once demolished, one will find the new under the rubble, the last blow of the pick will bring it to light, triumphant.
>
> "No doubt the seminal ideas of the new society must precede and prepare the movement; but this work seems to me already a long time accomplished, the old world is sufficiently dissected, the scalpel will not dig out of it one more fact. It is now for the storms to renew the atmosphere."

This romantic conspirator, improvisator of revolution, for ever going off at half-cock, incapable of political action, is really a caricature of the Marxist proletarian leader, in spite of his formidable influence as a legendary hero which made him "the head and the heart of the proletarian party." Nevertheless he reveals the basic pattern of Marxist thought: the proletariat because it is the only element which has no privileged relation to the means of production is the only element in modern society which can operate the economic machine successfully and reconstitute society on a basis of common interest in full production, and, therefore, what the proletariat in power will do can be left to take care of itself.

This form of thinking is not invalid and has many comparable examples: in science, a proposition is proved by the way in which it is arrived at; the kingdom of God is the inscrutable outcome, within and without, of Christian discipleship, not a programme of social reform and personal righteousness; a decision or law or state of society may be taken as fair or as free because it is the outcome of democratic procedures, regardless of what it may be. These conceptions are products of historical thinking, established and held in position and nourished by a root system of assumptions, which may crumble to dust when exposed to the light. But the real question is whether they continue to flourish in the soil of experience.

On Marxist assumptions, a dictatorship of the proletariat will have the fullest historical and philosophical sanction, a legitimacy far exceeding the conventional legitimacy of established governments. Moreover once it emerges on the historical plane and is established, Marxism enters a new phase, and the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes an oecumenical authority more unchallengeable by Marxists than the authority of the Papacy by Christians, because the dictatorship is not the vice-regent of the authority, but the absolute authority constituted by history as prophesied by Marx and taking up and superseding the Marxist phase, continuing, as Stalin says, the line of Marx and Engels. Thus the party line as determined by the leaders of a proletariat dictatorship engaged single-handed during thirty years in the socialist reconstruction of society over one-sixth of the world has unquestionable validity for Marxists. Both in prestige and in authority it is incomparable. The point is well put by the Hungarian, Georges Lukacs, one of the oldest and intellectually one of the most distinguished of European Marxists, in the course of a long controversy with the French Existentialist socialist Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

> " . . . at a time like ours, when socialism has behind it thirty years of actual history, a profession of abstract faith devoted to the final end of socialism does not mean a thing. The choice before which our social reality places the sincere thinker, the situation in which he finds himself, is the following: he must take his position in regard to socialism *such as it is,* as it has been born and is developing in the Soviet Union. He must take his position in regard to the entirely new ways which lead towards socialism and which have opened with the collapse of fascism. To say: I am for socialism, but not for soviet socialism; I am solely for a socialism which conforms to my idea of it—to say that, . . . would be comparable to the attitude of a mother

who should say: the flame of maternal love consumes me, I am maternal love embodied, but I refuse to love my child, because his ears run."

This must be the (thoroughly marxist) answer of the Marxist to-day to the would-be "classical" Marxist *pur sang*.

III

Stalin defines Leninism as "the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular." Lenin is the great international ideological leader of the proletariat, he says, because the fundamental thing in Leninism is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"One of two things:

"*Either* the peasant problem is the fundamental thing in Leninism, and in that case Leninism is not suitable, not essential for developed capitalist countries, for those which are not peasant countries. *Or* the fundamental thing in Leninism is the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in that case Leninism is the international doctrine of the proletarians of all lands, suitable and essential for all countries without exception, including the developed capitalist countries. Here one must choose."

However, there is really no choice, because the second alternative is merely a version of the first, and Stalin is turning the truth inside out. The fundamental thing in Leninism, which was the fundamental thing in Marxism, was decisively rejected as unsuitable by all the advanced workers' parties and leaders associated in the Second International; if it was received in Russia that was greatly due to the ideas and strategy and amazing personal force of Lenin himself, and because it came to peasant lands and to peasant lands alone as a gospel of salvation by industrial development. The intense militancy of Leninism comes from his appropriation of the fundamental thing in Marxism, with the result (1) that he has to engage in a "ruthless struggle against the opportunism" of the leaders of democratic socialism in the advanced capitalist countries who rejected this fundamental thing, "the fight against which was and remains an essential preliminary condition for a successful fight against capitalism" (Stalin); and with the result (2) that he has to fight for the ascendancy of a small proletarian party in a large peasant country. The actual ascendancy of the proletariat under Lenin in the revolution necessarily initiated the drive for industrial development which still continues. The desperate plight

and appalling losses of the Russian people opposed to the German armament with sticks in their hands gave historical impetus to the efforts of the Bolsheviks to force the pace of industrial equipment. Similarly, in the neglected peasant lands which are the present satellites of the Soviet Union there was no prospect of better things without the industrial development which only the gospel of communism promised to bring them.

Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the only form in which it exists or is likely to exist, is rather different in nature and in function from the dictatorship which Marx predicted by the logic of history. Instead of being the work of a numerous organized proletariat in an advanced capitalist country, bringing the established economic machine into full production, it is the strategic mastery of a small party of ideologists actually creating the machine economy and having to exploit the workers to do it. The facts as they have developed on all the national fronts require a fundamental revision of all the basic Marxist conceptions: the theory of the state, the theory of surplus value, the theory of historical materialism. But there seems to be no reason to doubt that Marx would have been happy about the dictatorship in Russia and her satellites. Marxism, in a phrase, is unexampled preoccupation with economic production, which is the supreme characteristic of the Soviet Union. It is not so much interest in production for its own sake (although it easily becomes that) as the supposition that economic production is the condition and means of everything else: easy production of plenty abolishes "bourgeois right," and the social discipline necessary to produce easy plenty is a permanent transformation of human nature. Thus the communist society to be achieved and the means of achieving it under the dictatorship of the proletariat solve at one and the same time the economic problem of full production, the political problem of the reconciliation of interests, and the moral problem of the good will; since the moral problem is identified with the political and social problem in the formula of Morelly: "To find a situation in which man can no longer be either corrupt or wicked."

On paper, the results produced by a dictatorship of the proletariat and by a political democracy in an advanced capitalist society might in time look near enough alike: organized plenty and security for all; educational and social opportunities and facilities for self-realization; a creative social ideal. No doubt the monolithic state can provide these conditions and produce state-determined persons to enjoy them, "heretics in the truth" as Milton called them because they know no alternative to their orthodoxy.

Only a pluralist democratic society can provide the conditions of personal self-determination and of the development of alternative views of the world and ways of life, and can respect and consider personal opinions and personal interests in all matters. Perhaps the difference in the abstract seems derisory. In practice, in terms of personality and consciousness and the finest human achievement, the difference is immeasurable. In an advanced capitalist society, organized labour is strong enough to get its own, and the productive resources are well enough developed to provide the social wealth in which all participate, and the government is bound to put an end to capitalist anarchy and take responsibility for planning the economy. In these circumstances, none but the insane, the simple and deluded idealist, and rank opportunists thirsting for power think that a dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary or desirable, or would be anything but immensely destructive and retrograde.

IV

What the dictatorship of the proletariat means in theory and practice once it is established, Stalin tells us. It is the continuation and completion of the strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution according to marxist theory; every person has eventually to be dispossessed of every form of ownership in the means of production, and the habits and outlook engendered by independence, privilege, and power based on private property have to be eliminated; machine production on a collective basis has to be stimulated, developed, and maximized, and socialized habits and outlook established. The dictatorship is exercised by the Communist Party functioning as a General Staff, which is disciplined to accept and apply the Party line as determined by the leaders. The "correct" line is determined by the correct relationship of the Party to the proletariat, the correct apprehension of Marx-Leninist doctrines, including the general principles of revolutionary strategy and tactics, and the correct appreciation of objective factors as confirmed by success.

The character of the dictatorship is described clearly by Stalin in *The Foundations of Leninism* and *On the Problems of Leninism* in the volume of Stalin's writings and speeches published in Great Britain in 1940 with the title *Leninism*. The following quotations from Lenin give the main outline.

> "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society."

But in the case of the Soviet Union the task is complicated by the backward condition of industry:

"The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the Socialist revolution, the more difficult it is for her to pass from the old capitalist relations to Socialist relations. To the tasks of destruction are added new, incredibly difficult tasks, viz., organizational tasks."

There can be no question of the proletariat party's sharing the dictatorship with any other element in society:

"The class which took political power into its hands did so knowing that it took this power *alone*. That is a part of the concept dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when the single class knows that it alone is taking political power in its hands, and does not deceive itself or others with talk about 'popular government, elected on the basis of universal suffrage, sanctified by the whole people.'

"The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and its political power."

The dictatorship disposes of absolute power for the carrying out of its destructive and constructive tasks:

"The scientific concept of dictatorship means nothing more nor less than unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and resting directly upon force.

" . . . the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this revolutionary force, the guarantee of its virility and its success, is in the fact that the proletariat represents and carries out a higher type of social organization of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of Communism.

"Its quintessence is the organization and discipline of the advanced detachment of the working people, of their vanguard, their sole leader, the proletariat. Its object is to establish Socialism, to abolish the division of society into classes, to make all members of society working people, to remove the basis for

any kind of exploitation of man by man. This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to Socialism, because the reorganization of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of petit-bourgeois and bourgeois dealings can be overcome only by a long and stubborn struggle."

Stalin sums up the three main aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"1. The utilization of the power of the proletariat for the suppression of the exploiters, for the defence of the country, for the consolidation of the ties with the proletarians of other lands, and for the development and the victory of the revolution in all countries.

"2. The utilization of the power of the proletariat in order to detach the toiling and exploited masses once and for all from the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the alliance of the proletariat with these masses, to enlist these masses for the work of Socialist construction, and to ensure the state leadership of these masses by the proletariat.

"3. The utilization of the power of the proletariat for the organization of Socialism, for the abolition of classes, for the transition to a society without classes, to a society without a state.

"The proletarian dictatorship is a combination of all three aspects. Not one of these three aspects can be advanced as the *sole* characteristic feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, it is sufficient, under the conditions of capitalist encirclement, that even one of these three features be lacking for the dictatorship of the proletariat to cease being a dictatorship. Therefore, not one of these three aspects can be omitted without running the risk of distorting the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only all these three aspects taken together give us a complete and finished concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The dictatorship is exercised by the Party, as Stalin explains:

"The highest expression of the leading role of the Party, here, in the Soviet Union, in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for example, is the fact that not a single important political or organizational question is decided by our Soviet and other mass organizations without guiding directions from

the Party. *In this sense* it could be said that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *in essence* the 'dictatorship' of its vanguard, the 'dictatorship' of its Party, as the main guiding force of the proletariat."

But the "dictatorship" of the Party over the proletariat is figurative only and means leadership and not "power based on force." "Whoever attributes to the Party the unnatural function of employing force against the working class violates the elementary requirements of correct mutual relationships between the vanguard and the class, between the Party and the proletariat." "Mutual confidence" expresses the correct relations between the Party and the proletariat. Stalin sums up:

"1. The prestige of the Party and the iron discipline of the working class that is necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat are built up not on fear nor on 'unrestricted' rights of the Party, but on the confidence of the working class in the Party, on the support which the Party receives from the working class.

"2. The confidence of the working class in the Party is not acquired at one stroke, and not by means of force against the working class, but by the Party's prolonged work among the masses, by a correct Party policy, by the ability of the Party to convince the masses by their own experience of the correctness of its policy, by the ability of the Party to secure the support of the working class and to induce the masses of the working class to follow its lead.

"3. Without a correct Party policy, reinforced by the experience of the struggle of the masses, and without the confidence of the working class, there is not and cannot be real Party leadership.

"4. The Party and its leadership, if the Party enjoys the confidence of the class, and if this leadership is a real leadership, cannot be contrasted to the dictatorship of the proletariat, because without the leadership of the Party (the 'dictatorship' of the Party), enjoying the confidence of the working class, a dictatorship of the proletariat to any extent durable is impossible."

Correct relations, mutual confidence, are disturbed:

"1. *If* the Party begins to build its prestige among the masses, not on its work and on the confidence of the masses, but on its 'unrestricted' rights;

"2. *If* the Party's policy is obviously wrong and the Party is unwilling to reconsider and rectify its mistake;

"3. *If* the Party's policy, although in general correct, is one which the masses are not yet ready to adopt, and the Party is either unwilling or unable to bide its time so as to give the masses an opportunity to become convinced by their own experience that the Party's policy is correct.

"The history of our Party provides a number of such cases. Various groupings and factions in our Party have fallen and have been dispersed because they violated one of these three conditions, and sometimes all these conditions taken together."

Thus the dictatorship of the leaders of the Party, who determine the Party line, is exercised on the basis of the support, sympathy, or at least the toleration, of the majority of the workers, who are dealt with not by regulations, decrees, orders, but by demonstrations, persuasions, exhortations, rewards. Coercion in one form or another is employed against recalcitrant minorities amongst the workers, Right or Left deviationists amongst the Party members and theoreticians (those who want to go too fast, "revolutionary phrasemongers," or not fast or far enough), and against "class enemies" who stand outside the proletarian organizations. It is employable at any time against individuals who fall under suspicion. All these features of the dictatorship are well exemplified in the struggle with the kulaks and the collective-farm movement or in the continuous effort to wind-up the tempo of economic production. The Party also promotes production and keeps itself in the right by looking out for and promoting people who show initiative and ability who are not in the Party.

" . . it is particularly these non-Party comrades who must receive our special attention, who must be promoted to commanding positions so that they may see for themselves that the Party appreciates capable and gifted workers. Some comrades think that only Party members may be placed in leading positions in the mills and factories. This is the reason why they not infrequently shove aside non-Party comrades who possess ability and initiative and promote Party members instead, although they are less capable and show no initiative. Needless to say, there is nothing more stupid and reactionary than such a 'policy,' so-called. It need hardly be proved that such a policy can only discredit the Party and repel the non-Party workers from it. Our policy is by no means to transform

the Party into an exclusive caste. Our policy is to create an atmosphere of 'mutual confidence,' of 'mutual control' (*Lenin*) between Party and non-Party workers. One of the reasons why our Party is strong among the working class is that it pursues such a policy."

The continuous purpose of the dictatorship is production and socialization, two aspects of the same thing, since the meaning, justification, and guarantee of socialism is that it is a higher type of economic organization, that is, more efficient. Thus collective and state farms, because of model layouts, electrification, and large-scale employment of tractors and machines, greatly increase the productivity of peasant labour, and at the same time remould the stubborn individual peasants into socialist proletarians. This theoretical certainty that only a socialist organization of social relations can historically correspond to a machine economy is the ground of confidence and of world policy.

"Crises, unemployment, waste, poverty among the masses—such are the incurable diseases of capitalism. Our system does not suffer from these diseases because power is in our hands, in the hands of the working class; because we are conducting a planned economy, systematically accumulating resources and properly distributing them among the different branches of the national economy. We are free of the incurable diseases of capitalism. This is what distinguishes us from capitalism; this is what constitutes our decisive superiority over capitalism."

When Stalin spoke these words in 1931 the capitalist anarchy in the Western world amounted to crisis and a general outlook of *sauve qui peut*, at the expense of the workers. At that time the Soviet Union was undoubtedly in a stronger position enjoying a brighter prospect. Peoples and governments in the western democracies have learned something since then; and to-day observers in the Soviet Union are not so confident that a "bourgeois" state with a mixed economy cannot overcome the worst contradictions and crises of capitalism. Even at that time Stalin said: "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us." And he goes on to look forward to a success which will change the whole world and free the entire working class, who meanwhile can have no other fatherland than this first working-class state.

V

The dictatorship of the proletariat as practised in the Soviet Union and in her satellites may or may not be more efficient than the western democracies in organizing the production and evoking the loyalty and releasing the energies of citizens. The present rivalry is working out the historical result of that practical test. On marxist assumptions, the result is not in doubt; but it is marxist assumptions that are in question. Unfortunately these assumptions involve much more than a healthy rivalry for superiority in organizational and administrative efficiency, such as the Webbs dreamed of at the time of their survey; they involve a life and death struggle *à outrance* from which there is no escape. On these assumptions, if there is resistance to the Soviet Union or to the Communist Parties, that can only be founded on the reactionary defence of profit-making interests. If democratic Labour parties are associated with the resistance, that can only be because they have been misled by opportunist leaders who have "grossly and openly repudiated the proletarian revolution," and because they have been corrupted by high wages drawn from imperialist profits. On marxist assumptions no other interpretation is possible and the only possible outcome is outright victory and domination of one side or the other; and on these assumptions the permanent victory of the capitalist elements is impossible in principle. On the other side, hopes are set on controlling the capitalist anarchy by government policy whilst working out national forms of the democratic social service state and creating a common interest, preferring evolution and compromise to revolution and dictation. And in external relations with Communism, the alternatives are: to contain Soviet expansion and penetration by the solidarity, success, and strength of social democracy, striking a world balance of power; or to force the Soviet Union into a world security system by declaration of an ultimatum.

It is tragic that the issue has been forced in this way, and it may be catastrophic. Except on marxist assumptions it is wholly unnecessary. In general, the present dictatorships of the proletariat are established in power for good or ill, and the present democracies, unless in France or Italy, are unlikely to surrender to proletarian revolution. The battle is joined, and the issue is in question most decisively, in the struggle for the soul of Germany. The "struggle for the soul of Germany" in marxist terms can only mean the class struggle in Germany supported from outside by the same opposed class interests at present dominant in world powers. However, although the actual situation in Germany is far too

complicated and too fluid to simplify into a formula, "the struggle for the soul of Germany" does mean something actual and something symbolic of the whole world issue. Marxism although it treats the convictions and imaginations of men as ultimately the reflections of economic class interest, nevertheless appeals to conviction and imagination, and its triumphs are triumphs of conviction and imagination. Unless men are convinced that marxist assumptions are fallacious and disastrous, and unless they are themselves attached to a different vision of human life in the world more deeply rooted in experience, opposition to Marxism has no head and no heart, no meaning and no strength.

It is not enough to say that dictatorship is evil in itself. The marxist argument is that there is no choice between dictatorship and democracy or freedom; there is only the choice between dictatorship of the proletariat, which is a stimulating creative leadership maximizing the productive energies and restoring the common interest of society and developing the conditions of complete state-less freedom, and the veiled dictatorship of bourgeois governments which maintain privilege, restriction, and oppression. The only answer from experience is that this certainly could be the only choice but as certainly is not necessarily the only choice. Unfortunately here as always Marxism goes one better than experience, and having done a service to mankind by refusing to cry "Peace, peace" where there is no peace, goes on to create a dangerous problem by insisting on crying "War, war" where there is no war; for it maintains that so long as the state exists there can only be a more or less disguised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in favour of privileged interests or an open dictatorship of the proletariat establishing a common interest: that is the absolute nature and sole meaning of the modern state, and therefore the only question is at the right moment to force the issue between the two powers and establish the dominion of the only one with whom the future lies.

This conception is not merely nor mainly a conclusion drawn from experience of class conflict (in France, for example), nor wholly and solely a conclusion drawn from Marx's analysis of capitalism; it derives from a metaphysical theory of cosmic development in general and man's historical development in particular—as Lenin loved to declare. This marxist general theory of development, which claims to put socialism on a scientific basis, is a radical and vicious misconception of the relation of mind and matter, man and history, and ultimately, man and man. Marx was bred in hegelianism and fascinated by its dynamic grandeur and evolutionary content. At the same time he was a convinced

materialist and could not but be dissatisfied with the static mechanistic materialism of the 18th century. In the light of its own law, to see the new idealism as the inevitable negation of this inadequate materialism and to restore materialism at a higher level including its own contradiction, thus realizing the dialectical development of historical philosophy, assimilating and superseding all previous movements of thought, was a temptation not to be resisted. Unfortunately this was to read into nature and into history characteristics proper only to mind. The terms "contradiction," "negation," "dialectic," belong properly speaking to discourse and only metaphorically to nature or history. Marx says that they belong to discourse simply and solely because they belong to nature first; mind is a product of material development and reflects the nature of reality. Let mind be a product of material development, it has nonetheless like everything else specific characteristics: it selects and abstracts from experience, and this is precisely the reason for the dialectic development and completion of argument by contradiction (a true form of the eclecticism which marxism abhors, for one reason because it has taken this specific characteristic of the mind and planted it in things, and then superstitiously inhibited the mind in its proper functions). The abstractions of the mind correspond to aspects, phases, sequences, identities, in the order of nature, and the mind is able to seize such aspects, arrest such phases, pick upon such identities or incidents, and distort them for some intellectual or aesthetic or practical purpose; and thus you have the probing and experimental techniques of the sciences, and the development of a selected aspect of things in the arts (as when a whole world of human living is focused in an episode or phase of the drama), and the high cultivation of certain qualities in a fruit or a flower, which biologically speaking is merely a by-product of the plant. To surrender this free activity of the mind to a fictitious logic of development in the order of nature which the mind merely reflects is a fatal folly. It is to stand theology on its head. It is the most perverse example of myth-making in history. It is the superstitious and paralyzing worship of one's own powers deified in nature. It is the obsession of Narcissus.

If you think of the class struggle (which is real enough) not as the antagonism of people struggling to live in a free-for-all (in terms of social psychology, that is, as Hobbes might have thought of it), but as the reflection of a concrete contradiction between the means of production and the social relations; and if you think of this contradiction metaphysically, as a logically necessary stage in the development of man's self-consciousness and freedom; then,

you are not going to analyse the problem with a view to alternative solutions, you are going to look for the resolution of the contradiction by the logic of its own development, and conform your mind to that outcome and act in a way to conform the outcome to your mind. Thought will only perfectly correspond with its object when the dictatorship of the proletariat has fully resolved the contradiction; and then the mind will reflect in self-consciousness the complete knowledge of man.

"The philosophers," Marx says, "have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it." That is excellent. And he understands that the way to change it is to work with the grain. But to confuse the economy of the mind with the economy of nature by treating one as the reflection of the other is to misuse and waste the resources of both. The blunder is seen plainly in the extreme feebleness of marxist epistemology. All the philosophies of the 19th century developed formally out of a theory of knowledge, Marxism amongst them. The problem of knowledge is a question of the nature of our knowledge; the reasonable assumption that there is an objective external world independent of and prior to the knowing mind does not answer this question. If the objective world reflected thought or thought reflected the objective world, that might be the answer to the question. It is difficult to find any meaning in either assumption, and neither has any warrant in experience. Thought develops by contradiction: a negative instance disproves the universality of the proposition and forces the mind to conceive a more general law which will include the contradictory instance. (The contradiction destroys the proposition inevitably; there is no future in the thought which seeks to ignore it or explain it away. This is the logic, Aristotelian in spite of repudiation, which the marxist likes to find, and which Marxism depends on finding, in nature.) This process, in its terms, in its meaning and use, is wholly and solely a process of mind. It is unthinkable in nature. It is the way of making the schematic representation of total experience consistent and productive, as the means of further operations, intellectual, aesthetic, and practical, leading to human satisfactions. Seriously to treat knowledge as a reflection of nature (mainly a reflection of natural process, since reality is process rather than substance), would make progress in the sciences wait upon development in the phenomena studied. Marxists of course apply their theory of knowledge mainly to history; the self consciousness of man keeps pace with social development and reflects it; at any time the theory of man and of history is determined by the stage of development and reflects it; man's full historical

consciousness of himself awaits the completion of the historical process and will reflect it.

Marx's theory of man and of history, like any other, uses the conceptual and factual material available at the time, and, like any other theory, it claims to explain and predict the phenomena with which it deals. Like any other, it stands or falls by its power to explain and predict. Marxism should certainly be tried by this test; but in this field explanation and prediction are the guide to an action which cannot wait for the final proof of results, and which itself makes the results equivocal. It is therefore important to recognize that in this case explanation and prediction are *formally* the expression of natural and historical process in terms of logical process, and the prediction of what will happen in history on the assumption that the terms are related as are the terms in a logical process of thought.

This absurd metaphysics has no foundation in experience and fails to appreciate the specific processes of nature and of thought and their fertile interaction. Reducing all the interrelated processes to one process, in effect, reduces thought to a stupid, stuttering literalness, spelling back what it has read into nature; or it is like treating mathematics as merely the mental accompaniment of physical operations with quantities. Of course, that is what mathematics is at the beginning, when the child learns to count with beans. Indeed, primitivism is a striking characteristic of marxism. Philosophic primitivism is matched by economic primitivism, distrust of the artifice of thought by distrust of the artifice of money; there is the desire to return to direct and simple relations, because money and thought are veils and we are liable to find that there is nothing behind the veils: therefore it is best to deal with things direct and not at several removes. In terms of hegelian self-realization, man is conceived as estranged from himself since the days of primitive communism: the work of his own hands becomes an object which itself dominates and absorbs him (the negation which contradicts and destroys him), as the thoughts of his own mind become in religion an object which itself dominates and absorbs him; in capitalism this process of self-estrangement reaches its final phase, for man as a proletarian is himself a commodity and as a capitalist he is able to buy his terms of existence and has no reality of his own; the proletariat is brought to the historical consciousness of this self-estrangement, and the dictatorship of the proletariat by destroying capitalism (the negation of the negation) restores communism and the correspondence of thought with its real object, at a higher level (made possible by the intervening stages of objectivication) and raises man to full self-consciousness and freedom. Man

is restored to himself in the consciousness of himself as a worker along with his fellow workers, joint-masters of the means of production and of a common destiny in their social use. Man is literally an economic animal, is estranged from himself in any other image, can only be himself, and, therefore, only know himself, in the literalness of communism. Thus marxism (contrary to promise) gives man a metaphysical essence in place of his historical nature, reduces to one note his chromatic range; its man is censored man, its humanism is puritanism.

There is no reason to doubt that marxism is grappling in earnest with fundamental problems, and that is the reason for taking it seriously at the intellectual level. But drastic remedies may be nearly as bad as the disease; the long-term results are not easy to foresee and may leave the health permanently impaired. There is, therefore, every reason for making quite sure that drastic remedies are called for and are absolutely necessary.

Before pursuing this point to a conclusion, I quote a passage from the recent book of an intelligent Roumanian marxist, Zevedel Barbu, in order to show that I am not fathering upon marxism the repudiated offspring of its irresponsible youth:

> "The action of the proletariat is not negative; on the contrary it is constructive in the highest degree. The proletariat builds a new social structure, capable of overcoming all the contradictions which are disclosed in the practical activity of man. The most serious contradiction is that which opposes man to his own practical activity. In suppressing private property, and in instituting collective ownership, the proletariat suppresses the social classes and at the same time the State, inasmuch as it is force opposed to the natural fulfilment of man. In suppressing the social classes the proletariat suppresses itself. We then reach the consummation of the dialectical process, the season of *fruit.* In order to produce a new plant, the fruit rots, and thus appears the seed which carries within it the future plant. In the realization of a new social structure, the proletariat makes the supreme sacrifice: the sacrifice of self. (*Le Dévelopment de la Pensée Dialectique.*)

VI

The leading theoreticians who moulded the thought and policies of the great social democratic parties of Europe in the generation after Marx, ardent admirers and students of him as they were, as responsible and competent thinkers knew that it was necessary to purge marxism of its bastard idealism. As Bernstein put it: "What

Marx and Engels have done that is great they have done not with the help of Hegel's dialectic, but simply in spite of that dialectic." Kautsky found more use for the dialectic than Bernstein, but strictly as a method, for formulation and analysis, as a resource of thought not as a process of nature or history. Similarly Max Adler, theoretician of the Austrian marxists, denied metaphysical contradictions in nature and history which could only be overcome by leaps, and recognized only social antagonisms to be resolved by political means. It was Lenin, fighting hard against the "renegades," "revisionists," and "opportunists" of the Second International, who restored the metaphysical content to marxism. "No one better than Lenin," says Mr. Barbu, "has grasped this dialectical view of matter." It was indeed congenial to him, this endless transformation of things by the principle of contradiction, "which makes nature a battle-field for opposing forces." Thus he restored to marxism its fighting edge of intransigence with which to make the revolution and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, the destined negation of the negation which restores man to himself at a higher level of attainment.

The metaphysics is put back into marxism not because it is true, for it had been cast out by the most able Labour leaders in Europe as manifestly untrue, but because it is the court which pronounces the sentence on man which is executed by the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the pretension of the dictatorship to rational authority. That is why marxists take such a vigilant interest in philosophy and take quick steps to quench any glimmer of intelligence on the question of epistemology, seemingly such an innocent and private affair of the head. They have understood well enough from the first that this small breach is enough to rive the trunk and kill the tree. Thus, before the development of marxism, Théodore Dézamy, a schoolmaster described by Marx as one of the most scientific of the French communists, had understood that "doctrinal intransigence" was necessary to forge a communist party, that philosophy was not a secondary matter, that the proletariat must be given a line on every question, and that every sign of slipping from the theoretical line established by the proletariat would mean in practice a reformist politic tending to the liquidation of the whole movement. In other words, the proletariat had to be sealed off in mind and body, and society by their means remade in their image. The discovery of the hegelian "contradiction" in nature and in history admirably served the purposes of such a proletarian philosophy, for if it had not met the need it would have created the mission. Then Proudhon, as the ancestor and type of all those "sterile" thinkers

who dream of tinkering with capitalism and instal themselves helplessly in the contradiction instead of making up their minds to surmount it by a violent leap, can be reviled and ridiculed as an unprincipled intellectual squinter.

The sombre splendour of marxist fanaticism has its fascination: it appeals to the puritan in us. It is not an essay in the interpretation of history: it proposes to remake man for all time in the image of a metaphysical essence. There need be no doubt that it can do what it proposes to do. The dictatorship of the proletariat which carries out the metaphysical sentence during "an entire historical epoch" has power over the inwardness of consciousness. That does not mean that the metaphysical sentence is true, pointing to the fulfilment of man in history, but only that the Communist Party in power can carry it out. That is why those who recognize clearly how false it is and what the resources are from which it cuts man off must oppose it with all their power as the greatest threat to the true economy of civilization.

Nevertheless, it would be blind and silly to pretend that communism, all error and evil, arises in opposition to an established good. In many parts of the world to-day, it is, all told, a threat to something considerably better; but its profound challenge is to the deeper level of difficult possibilities for the sake of which alone it is worth resisting. It is a challenge to those who love and want historical man not metaphysical man, humanism not puritanism.

H. J. BLACKHAM

MR. ELIOT'S COLD HEART

A Review of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture.*

"Some men have too bad hearts to have good heads: they cannot be good at Theorie who have been so bad at the Practice."

John Smith: *Select Discourses.*

TO the question, What is Mr. Eliot's new book about? there are several answers. It is a contribution to non-scientific sociology; it is an informal theory of culture; a critique of recent trends in the theory and practice of education in Britain; an excursion into philosophical foundations; and a critical history of *The Criterion.* And in each of these aspects it repays serious attention. But it may also, I think, be seen as a chapter in Mr. Eliot's spiritual autobiography

and it is from this point of view alone that I want here to say something about it.

It is my belief that Mr. Eliot cares really about only one thing, and that is the purification of the motive. Compared to this, everything else is peripheral—the writing of poetry, the writing of literary criticism, editing, publishing, broadcasting, and even membership of the Anglo-Catholic communion: peripheral, and ultimately instrumental only. Everything of course connects; nor does one doubt that the exercise of his various gifts has for Mr. Eliot carried with it satisfactions sufficient to produce, in this or that moment, the illusion that such satisfaction is self-justifying. But never, one feels, for more than a moment. That central preoccupation never ceases to press its claim, and never claims less than sovereignty. And since Mr. Eliot has never for long denied that claim, there is little danger for him of anything but a temporary loss of perspective.

If this is true, that only the purification of the motive ultimately matters to Mr. Eliot, there may be some point, and no impertinence, in asking the question, How pure *is* the motive? And since for Mr. Eliot, the purification of the motive must be achieved in the context of the Christian interpretation of experience, the question must take the form, How good a Christian is Mr. Eliot?

It is painful to remember how bad a Christian Mr. Eliot was when he wrote (for instance) the essay on Arnold and Pater, and that other essay entitled *Catholicism and the International Order.** The wicked irresponsibility of these two sentences in the latter essay is hardest to forget:

> The non-Catholic, certainly the non-Christian philosopher, *feeling no obligation to alter himself, and therefore no cogent need to understand himself,* is apt to be under the sway of his prejudices, his social background, his individual tastes. (p. 155. My emphasis.)

and

> The Catholic should have high ideals—or rather, I should say *absolute* ideals—and moderate expectations; the heretic, whether he call himself fascist, or communist, or democrat, or rationalist, always has low ideals and great expectations. For I say that all ambitions of an earthly paradise are informed by low ideals. (p. 122.)

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*In *Essays Ancient and Modern.*

What this amounts to is a complete denial of spirituality to all the pagan world, to everyone outside the community of Christians. This is bad enough; and would be bad, because false, even if it were a conviction reached after a most scrupulous re-examination of the whole problem—which is nothing less than the problem of the relation of moral and religious experience. But it is so much more shocking because Mr. Eliot speaks as if for the Christian *there were no problem.* Should it be necessary to remind him that, for instance, the best 17th century divines (Mr. Eliot knows them intimately) did think there was a problem, and grappled with it repeatedly and with the utmost seriousness? Hooker, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, all the Cambridge Platonists, the scientist-theologians of the Royal Society group—all of them meet the problem of *the good pagan,* as they called it, and all of them feel obliged to analyse it in detail before making a pronouncement. Whether Socrates and Marcus Aurelius will on the Day of Judgement have their virtuous lives imputed to them for righteousness may indeed be a rather academic problem to-day. But the larger question implicit in the 17th-century variant is not academic: not, at least, to those whose main business in life it is to discover and articulate the most permanent coherences of their spiritual experience. To these, the relation of the realms of moral and religious experience is not a matter to be settled for all time by ecclesiastical authority; it has to be investigated afresh, and in detail, by every individual in every generation.* And though what he finally dis-

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*As, for instance, Prof. H. A. Hodges, a Christian philosopher contemporary with Mr. Eliot, has done, and come to conclusions which do not confirm Mr. Eliot's views on the matter. Here are Prof. Hodges' conclusions: Many who shut their minds to God are able to keep them open to their fellowmen, and to recognise in them the meaning and inherent worth of personality. Where this happens, there survives even in the atheist or the secular humanist a flame of genuine spiritual vision, which can burn high and lead to a real self-devotion and self-sacrificing love. The question is often asked, whether it is possible to maintain a high moral standard without a recognition of God as its source. The answer is that it depends. Logically, it is not possible, since the dignity of the person is in fact the glory of God shining in and through him, and if the human person is not made in the image of God then the moral respect which we feel for him is groundless. But happily people are not always logical, and it is in real life perfectly possible to doubt or deny what is in fact the ground of the worth of the person, and yet to retain a clear and vivid sense of that worth, and to work it out in a noble life. It is important to have our minds clear about this to-day, because some of the Christian's best allies in our increasingly secularist world are people of this kind, who are blind to God, but are not blind to his creatures.—*The Way of Integration,* p.13. Lecture given at the Third Conference of the Methodist Society for Medical and Pastoral Psychology.

It is not, I think, necessary to accept Prof. Hodges' analysis of the misery of man without God in order to appreciate the significant difference between his attitude and Mr. Eliot's to "the good pagan."

covers may only confirm what the Church Fathers and the Popes and the Councils have always said (though, of course, it may also be different), the task of engaging in such a re-examination is in any case an imperative duty, and the shirking of it a major failure in a Christian's spiritual conduct. I would not care to say that Mr. Eliot has altogether shirked it; what I do say is that whatever thought he has given to the matter is not apparent in the pronouncement. It has nothing of the weight of intense meditation which informs Mr. Eliot's most memorable generalisations; so little weight indeed, that it is superficial to the point of frivolity. And since of Mr. Eliot one has almost immoderate expectations, this must be seen not as a lapse, but as a form of the corrupt consciousness. That is why it is irresponsible and wicked.

Much the same must be said about his attitude to Arnold.* When he claims that Arnold—the Arnold of *Culture and Anarchy* and *Literature and Dogma*—is a friend ("To us Arnold is rather a friend than a leader"; and "We go to him for refreshment and for the companionship of a kindred point of view to our own . . ."), we exclaim, in Arnold's name, heaven defend us against such a friend as Mr. Eliot. For the ferocity of Mr. Eliot's contempt is quite appalling. That he should hold his own theological convictions with passion can only be a matter for commendation, one would not wish him to hold them in any other way. But that his passion should fill his head with blood, so that sight and hearing are impaired, so that he can neither see nor hear *what* Arnold is saying—this is worse than deplorable. What Arnold is talking about, in *Literature and Dogma* in particular, is the relation of conduct and theology, of the experience and the formula, of the fact and the explanation of the fact: a matter which Mr. Eliot may take as settled for all time,† but with what justification the experience of all reflective minds, whether Christian or secular-humanist, will judge. It is not the answer we are here concerned with; again, it may well be that the answer Mr. Eliot subscribes to is the true one (Arnold himself says that the religious answer is the only answer).‡ What we are concerned to do is, not merely to defend as a legitimate preoccupation, but to urge as the positive duty of every Christian who has any capacity for speculative

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*"Arnold and Pater" in *Selected Essays.*

†". . . Morality is a means and not an end. The Church exists for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls: Christian morality is part of the means by which these ends are to be attained."—*The Idea of a Christian Society,* p.92.

‡*Literature and Dogma,* Ch. X, sect. 3.

thought to engage in just the kind of exploration of the relationship in which Arnold engages in *Literature and Dogma*. And we want to claim, in the teeth of Mr. Eliot's contempt of Arnold's effort, that *Literature and Dogma* is a classic of the human spirit. All that Mr. Eliot denies, explicitly or by implication, we affirm: that Arnold does not merely understand intellectually what his Christian faith is and involves, but *possesses* it intimately as experience; and that his possession separates him by the breadth of the heavens from Humanists of the type of Irving Babbitt, Foerster, and even William James. But from Mr. Eliot's account one would never suspect that there was the smallest difference. We claim also, that Arnold's sense of the magnitude of the problem and its pressing urgency informs every line of the book, and is matched only by the vigour and clarity with which it is articulated. But above all we claim that *Literature and Dogma* exhibits, in detail of the most delicate minuteness, one of the central paradoxes of our spiritual experience—the continuity of the human order with the divine, of moral experience with religious, on the one hand, and their absolute discontinuity on the other. How exactly the continuity presents itself *in experience*, how exactly *in experience* the great divide is reached when the incompleteness of the moral alone is perceived, and the leap is made (or not made), what exactly a religious morality gives which a non-religious morality cannot give—all these things Arnold talks about. And he talks about them in the kind of detail that at once establishes his authority and is the guarantee of his total responsibility; and with the kind of passion that disciplines and never merely intoxicates.

It is true that Arnold missed out some very important things. He speaks much too little about the Gospel as a gospel of love, and does not see at all clearly enough that the Christian's discipleship is a discipleship of love: for sweet reasonableness is not after all quite the same as love—though it comes much nearer, one must add, than the sort of Christianity with Christ but without Jesus which T. E. Hulme once popularized and Mr. Eliot assented to. Nor does Arnold understand at all that Christianity offers the individual a living *community* as well as personal salvation, and the salvation indeed only within the community. These are grave omissions: but they are not, we observe, the omissions that trouble Mr. Eliot. Nor can we deny that some of Arnold's formulas are unfortunate, notably that definition of religion as "morality touched by emotion." But this is no more than unfortunate, for it is utterly redeemed by the details which are there to be found for the looking.* Only Mr.

*See, again, *Literature and Dogma*, Ch. X, sections 3, 4, 5.

Eliot won't look. And as for Mr. Eliot's charge that Arnold does not "define his terms" ("culture," "conduct," etc.), we remark merely that the demand is grounded in a rather elementary misunderstanding of the nature of definition. The detail *is* the definition, the description of the experience is the definition of the experience; no other kind of definition is either necessary or desirable. And Arnold's detail, as I have affirmed, is as profoundly true as a man who is not a saint or a mystic can make it. But, then, Mr. Eliot himself is neither a saint nor a mystic, and he should know that one does not make unreasonable demands of spirits of the middle rank.

I can think of only one reason for Mr. Eliot's behaviour towards Arnold. I believe that he in fact found Arnold's account of moral and religious experience only too true and too acceptable, but because the enterprise was not conducted within the framework of a particular theological view, because Arnold's is *a free mind* (therefore for Mr. Eliot, but not for us, *ipso facto,* an uninformed, undisciplined and incoherent mind), examining with passion and care the dimensions of experience which we call moral and religious—therefore Mr. Eliot throws away the baby with the bath, repudiates the analysis of experience along with the uncongenial idiom and the unacceptable conclusions, and does all this without awareness of what it is he is doing. If we still believe that theology is to be taken seriously as a discipline of the mind and the passions, we must believe it in spite of Mr. Eliot's performance in the essay on Arnold.

So much, then, for the old unregenerate Mr. Eliot, who cared too much about the cogency of his theological position and too little about the experience which gives meaning and truth to the doctrine. *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* shows a marked change. It is not primarily a matter of a change in mood and tone, though certainly one remarks a sobriety and moderation that were conspicuously absent in much of the earlier writing.* Still less is it a matter of any change of "position": Mr. Eliot is no doubt more convinced than ever that Catholicism is the only true statement of our spiritual experience, and convinced no doubt on the best grounds. It is rather a matter of an increased capacity to perceive *and acknowledge* the immense intricacy of the problems precipitated by our experience at its profoundest levels, and the immense difficulty of finding solutions that will satisfy as solutions while losing nothing of the precious detail as given in experience. With this goes an increased capacity to be perplexed, not (as before) merely to recommend perplexity

**After Strange Gods,* in particular.

as a proper response; and, with this, a sharpening of what we may call *philosophical* awareness. Though Mr. Eliot's capacity for abstruse thinking, to quote his own phrase, is still limited, there are many indications that, more conscious than before, he recognises a philosophical problem when he encounters it, and—more important—is capable of being subdued by the range and magnitude of its implications. All this in the credit column: I should like to illustrate from the text.

In the first section, entitled "The Three Senses of Culture," Mr. Eliot has been analysing the relation of culture and religion, and drawing our attention to the inescapable paradoxes that belong to it. In the course of this he pauses to reflect on the most fundamental of the paradoxes:

> . . . To see the unity of culture and religion in this way neither implies that all the products of art can be accepted uncritically, nor provides a criterion by which everybody can immediately distinguish between them. Aesthetic sensibility must be extended into spiritual perception, and spiritual perception must be extended into aesthetic sensibility and disciplined taste before we are qualified to pass judgment upon decadence or diabolism or nihilism in art. To judge a work of art by artistic or by religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards should come in the end to the same thing: though it is an end at which no individual can arrive.
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> *The way of looking at culture and religion which I have been trying to adumbrate is so difficult that I am not sure I grasp it myself except in flashes, or that I comprehend all its implications.* (p.30.)

The sentence I have emphasised is almost a sufficient comment on both the achievement and the failure. He perceives the particular configuration of consciousness he is trying to describe as a kind of internal pressure, sometimes more, sometimes less precisely differentiated, therefore sometimes more and sometimes less capable of being "held," therefore correspondingly more and less expressible. But it is never adequately *expressed*, because Mr. Eliot has not the gift which belongs distinctively to the creative philosopher, the gift of creating an idiom in which this elusive state of consciousness may be caught and immobilized without doing violence to its mobile life in experience. Mr. Eliot's statement may be seen as a prose-paraphrase of the philosopher's poem; he himself can't write the poem. What one admires so much, however, is his sensitiveness to the pressure as it appears in consciousness, and the acuteness with

which he senses its complex implications, and the accuracy of his paraphrase.

Of Mr. Eliot's advance towards a more humble spirit—humble because it sees and feels so much more fully what is involved in day-to-day living for those (in Coleridge's words), "whose genius and pursuits are eminently *subjective,* where the mind is intensely watchful of its own acts and shapings, thinks while it feels in order to understand, and then to generalize that feeling": of this the following passage is a moving instance:

> The reflection that what we believe is not merely what we formulate and subscribe to, but that behaviour is also belief, and that even the most conscious and developed of us live also at the level on which belief and behaviour cannot be distinguished, is one that may, once we allow our imagination to play upon it, be very disconcerting. It gives an importance to our most trivial pursuits, to the occupation of our every minute, which we cannot contemplate long without the horror of nightmare. When we consider the quality of the integration required for the full cultivation of the spiritual life, we must keep in mind the possibility of grace and the exemplars of sanctity in order not to sink into despair. And when we consider the problem of evangelisation, of the development of a Christian society, we have reason to quail. To believe that *we* are religious people and that other people are without religion is a simplification which approaches distortion. (p.32.)

It is not, I think, extravagant to see this as an expiation (of course, oblique) for the un-Christian passages I drew attention to in the essay in *Catholicism and the International Order*: "to believe that *we* are religious people and that other people are without religion is a simplification which approaches distortion." And there are also amends made (again obliquely) to Arnold . . . . "What we believe is not merely what we formulate and subscribe to, but . . . behaviour is also belief"; and on the next page, "For what a people may be said to believe, as shown by its behaviour, is . . . always a great deal more and a great deal less than its professed faith in its purity." Mr. Eliot, it may be noted, here uses *behaviour* with exactly as much precision as Arnold used the word *conduct,* and with no more. But we do not ask for definitions, or for a more "positive content";* there is no need of it here, as there was none in *Literature and Dogma.*

*"Nothing in his (Arnold's) prose work, therefore, will stand very close analysis, and we may well feel that the positive content of many words is very small."—*Arnold and Pater,* in *Selected Essays,* p.393.

There is much, then, in the book to convince one that Mr. Eliot is a much better Christian than he was. But still not good enough: still there is a large residue of unregeneracy. It appears with shocking force in the passage on the "Mute Inglorious Milton dogma"; but this passage belongs to a larger context, of which we must try to trace the outlines. Briefly, it amounts to this. Throughout the chapter on Education and Culture, Mr. Eliot deplores the incapacity of the barbarians (of the Ministry of Education, etc.), to *appreciate,* that is, understand fully and in detail, what it is they are wanting to throw away: the grace and beauty of life as lived (at its best) in the stately homes and the Public Schools and the older universities, and the standard that this kind of life provides for a whole society. What the barbarians are missing is made clear in much persuasive detail, but nowhere is there any indication that Mr. Eliot has asked himself some quite elementary questions. For instance: How shall they know its value, when they have had no direct experience of it? Or supposing for the moment that they can experience it "imaginatively": can one reasonably expect that the knowledge of their deprivation, which must accompany such an effort of the imagination, shall *not* induce envy, bitterness and so iconoclasm? But in any case: isn't the implicit demand for such imaginative experiencing more than we can reasonably ask of people as deprived of the opportunities of practising this skill as the barbarians avowedly are? Do not the conditions of their lives positively incapacitate them for this sort of experiencing? And even where there are special gifts to overcome the brutalizing effects of their lives—where there is a specially large measure of vitality and resilience, and the love of people and ideas, and the enjoyment of animal living to make the resistance to despair at all possible—even where all this is given (and how rarely it *is* given), can such a triumph of survival be achieved at anything but a huge cost? Is it possible that they should ever really know how to enjoy a tranquil spirit and a free mind, the two necessary conditions of the kind of living that Mr. Eliot recommends as truly civilised? It is not possible, and it is shameful that Mr. Eliot should fail to see this.

But it is the more shameful in view of Mr. Eliot's own incapacity for the kind of imaginative experiencing that he implicitly demands of the barbarians. Consider the passage on the mute inglorious Miltons, which I shall quote in full.

> The Equality of Opportunity dogma, which is associated with the belief that superiority is always superiority of intellect, that some infallible method can be designed for the detection of intellect, and that a system can be devised which will infallibly

nourish it, derives emotional reinforcement from the belief in the mute inglorious Milton. This myth assumes that a great deal of first-class ability—not merely ability, but genius—is being wasted for lack of education; or, alternatively, that if even one potential Milton has been suppressed in the course of centuries, from deprivation of formal teaching, it is still worth while to turn education topsy-turvy so that it may not happen again. (It might be embarrassing to have a great many Miltons and Shakespeares, but that danger is remote.) In justice to Thomas Gray, we should remind ourselves of the last and finest line of the quatrain, and remember that we may also have escaped some Cromwell guilty of his country's blood. The proposition that we have lost a number of Miltons and Cromwells through our tardiness in providing a comprehensive state system of education, cannot be either proved or disproved: it has a strong attraction for many ardent reforming spirits. (pp. 102-3.)

The first thing to observe is that Mr. Eliot seriously mis-states the case of the opposition. He charges them with lamenting the deprivation of *formal teaching* which the mute inglorious Miltons are forced to suffer. But surely it isn't the formal teaching one cares about? Surely it is the deprivation of security and leisure—especially leisure—to think and grow and idle and learn what it feels like to possess a free spirit; surely it is this that corrodes the heart of the social reformer, We are not concerned for the moment to calculate the profit and the loss: we know that at Cambridge and Oxford, for instance, leisure is often misused, and we know that security can breed all the complacencies of the sheltered life. But we know also that civilized living is possible only when the mind is free at least of petty harassments and degradations; and it is this freedom that the mute inglorious Miltons are deprived of in an unjust society. Consider now the last sentence of the passage from Mr. Eliot:

> The proposition . . . cannot be either proved or disproved: it has a strong attraction for many ardent reformers.

There is the cold heart. Mr. Eliot simply doesn't care. If he cared enough about the deprivation, he would *want* to prove or disprove that proposition. He wouldn't be able to rest until he *had* proved or disproved it. To prove or disprove it would be for him a matter as vital as to prove or disprove the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation. But the doctrine of the Incarnation is theology, and we know that mistakes there are fatal; whereas our attitude to the dispossessed in the earthly city is merely morality, and there culpable

misunderstanding and callous indifference are alike venial. Mr. Eliot, we remember, allowed himself a large sneer at Arnold's suggestion that the imitation of Christ was more important than the doctrine of the Incarnation—"while wondering whether Arnold's 'imitation' is even a good piece of mimicry . . . etc." What are we, in turn, to say about Mr. Eliot's own effort?

The point of all this is not to offer Mr. Eliot an elaborate *tu quoque,* but rather, to establish his fundamental disqualification for the very task he has set himself in his book: to answer the question, What are the permanent conditions in the absence of which no higher culture can be expected? In the course of the book he isolates the conditions and invites us to assent to his analysis. But on what compulsion shall we assent? How can he expect us, the barbarians, to trust his insight, to take his analyses and correctives seriously when he shows himself to be so patently deficient in his understanding of the very thing he is preaching about — the quality of living, which is ultimately the quality of our moral experience. Mr. Eliot fails to qualify, not for lack of genius, much less for lack of culture and learning, but for lack of a moral sensibility just fine enough to make the ultimately necessary discriminations. And for such a lack not all the genius and all the culture in the world can be a sufficient compensation.

I have made it clear that there is, to my mind, something very wrong with Mr. Eliot's Christianity. And perhaps the source of all the mischief is what Bishop Butler called *the contracted spirit,* what I have called simply the cold heart. For one cannot fail to notice the *lovelessness* of Mr. Eliot's faith. There are so many indications:

> " . . . It [the knowledge that behaviour is also belief] gives an importance to our most trivial pursuits, to the occupation of our every minute, which we cannot contemplate long *without the horror of a nightmare . . .*"
>
> " . . . Any religion [even, that is, an inferior or materialistic religion] while it lasts, and on its own level, gives an apparent meaning to life, provides the framework for a culture, and protects the mass of humanity from *boredom and despair . . .*"
>
> "When we consider the quality of the integration required for the full cultivation of the spiritual life, we must keep in mind the possibility of grace and the exemplars of sanctity in order not *to sink into despair . . .*"

The horror of nightmare? Is this the sort of response that the ardours and responsibilities of the Christian life are supposed to

excite in a Christian spirit? Boredom and despair, sinking into despair: it may indeed be part of the office of the Christian faith to supply a means of escape from these, but it is odd and startling that the emphasis should so *continually* fall there in Mr. Eliot's writing. Where, one wonders, is the peace and power and joy, especially the joy, which is God's promise to the faithful? Where is the happiness which, Arnold said, was the peculiar "secret" of Catholicism? Of course there is a kind of happiness in this or that part of the Quartets, *In the drawing of the Father.* But even there it is perhaps rather the desire for happiness, the knowledge of what the secret possessed would mean, than its actual possession that moves one to compasion and hope. To find the happiness that Arnold has in mind one must seek it in Jesus, in St. Theresa, in John Smith and Benjamin Whichcote, and in Father D'Arcy, but not in Mr. Eliot. And one cannot but think that this defect at the heart of his faith must be linked with the more readily-observable defects in his moral sensibility. They have a common source: the cold heart, the contracted spirit, in which there is no abundance, or even a sufficiency, of that love which is in the reach of all men, but in the Christian's pre-eminently.

If these reflections on the imperfections of Mr. Eliot's faith are substantially correct, the non-Christian humanist receives, I think, no small confirmation of what is (or ought to be) the foundation of his secular faith: that the highest, because the most inclusive, realm of human experience is the moral, not the religious; that therefore, even the most devoted service to the glory of God is never more than a means to the purification of the motive, which is the ultimate end; that this means is open (genuinely) to only a very few people in every generation; and that, for the rest of us, it is *only* in the greatness of the world and of man's mind that we live, move, and have our being.

D. KROOK

REVIEWS

Ape and Essence. By Aldous Huxley. Chatto & Windus Ltd. 7s. 6d.

The best way of describing the effect produced by this book is to say that it makes "Brave New World" read like a pleasant fantasy. The failure of science—for "Ape and Essence" depicts the world after the use of the Atom Bomb in World War III—is even

more horrible than science's "success" in creating the perfectly-regulated universe of the earlier work.

The story proper opens when a small party of scientists from New Zealand, which has remained untouched by the bomb, lands on the devastated coast of Southern California. One of their number, Dr. Poole, a "Liberal-Protestant" and a botanist, becomes separated from the others and is captured by a group of survivors living in the ruins of Los Angeles. With one or two exceptions they are sub-humans and their religion is that of Belial. Poole soon has an opportunity of finding out what this means for they are about to celebrate Belial Day, the holiest day in the year, thereby inaugurating the annual fortnight during which sexual intercourse is allowed. During the rest of the year continence is strictly enforced and permanent attachments beween the sexes are strictly taboo.) Such, together with other rites, is the triumph of the Devil in human history. As the Arch-Vicar of Belial explains to Poole, this is a comparatively recent development, but none the less evident. "The longer you study modern history," he says, "the more evidence you find of Belial's Guiding Hand. Take the first World War, for example. If the people and the politicians hadn't been possessed, they'd have come to terms, they'd have negotiated a peace without victory. But they couldn't, they couldn't. It was impossible for them to act in their own self-interest. They had to do what the Belial in them dictated—and the Belial in them wanted the Communist Revolution, wanted the Fascist reaction to that revolution, wanted Mussolini and Hitler and the Politburo, wanted famine, inflation and depression, wanted armaments as a cure for depression; wanted the persecution of the Jews and the Kulaks . . . He wanted concentration camps and gas chambers and cremation ovens. He wanted saturation bombing (what a deliciously juicy phrase!) . ."

These are the effects of Belial's triumph. What are their causes? They are principally Nationalism and the myth of Progress, defined as "trying to get something for nothing." These two have justified the sacrifice of the individual to what are basically power-politics. And science has enabled man to pursue these literally diabolical aims with unparalleled efficiency. There is even a suggestion that the Third World War will have been so thorough as to have poisoned the soil and atmosphere and thereby rendered any future civilization quite out of the question.

What, then, can we do? To those who have read the "Perennial Philosophy" the answer is not surprising—it is firstly the discarding of everything that hampers our mystical awareness of God, and secondly the love of one human being for another. This latter is

embodied in the love that springs up between Dr. Poole and Loola, one of the least degraded and most human specimens in the Los Angeles colony. With their flight together the book ends. But although Poole says to his companion: "Whatever Belial may have done with the rest of the world, you and I can always work with the order of things and not against it," the book expresses no real confidence. The picture is one of unrelieved despair, as if it were the vision of a Tolstoy, sharpened and exacerbated by two world wars and an enormous peace-time increase in man's inhumanity to man. One realises more than ever that the Russo-Japanese War which Tolstoy found so horrifying was very small beer compared to what later generations have seen.

But for this very reason, "Ape and Essence," though through no fault of Huxley's, is somehow unsatisfying. For all its misanthropic sombreness and mystic appeal, it amounts to little more than an intensely bitter and prolonged jeu d'esprit, as though the human imagination were just unable to conceive and express in its entirety the whole horror of the situation—without, that is to say, losing its balance altogether. One is driven to conclude that only a madman could give adequate expression to nothing more than the events of the last ten years alone. But Huxley, of course, cannot be blamed for this. On the other hand, I think one can legitimately complain of the over-great importance given to the grotesque sexual arrangements of the Los Angeles community. Are these the worst consequences of a full-scale atomic war?

However, from this aspect, the novel is a logical culmination of much of Huxley's previous work. He has always cherished something of the Swift-Pascal spirit in relation to the body and its functions. Now it receives full play without any of the indulgence accorded to the epicurean Eustace Barnack for example, in "Time Must Have a Stop." He has similarly brushed aside the equally inadequate John Barnack type, perpetually engaged in delivering "progressive" lectures and writing articles for the left-wing press on the advance of Socialism as the hope of the world. Only Bruno and the gospel of non-attachment remain—but whereas Bruno was a character worthy of respect, the same cannot be said to the same extent of Dr. Poole. In short, it seems paradoxical to select as the most promising instrument of man's salvation a man who is himself so weak. If this is the best of the lot, why bother at all?

This suggests a further flaw in Huxley's attitude. No doubt it is true that every person who hates is a disillusioned lover but one cannot help feeling that if the story of "Ape and Essence" is to be taken seriously, an absence of charity and sympathy mars its

message. There is, in fact, very little to suggest that Huxley feels any particular distress at the collapse of civilization. He mixes two mutually contradictory attitudes. Either one loves and is compassionate or one makes no pretence of love and remains indifferent.

Yet, when all is said and done, "Ape and Essence" remains a most moving, sincere and courageous attempt to grapple with the inhumanity and cruelty of our time. The solution proposed may not be the only one—it may not be a solution at all—and if the problem is greater than one man can tackle, as in fact it is, this is hardly Huxley's fault. We should still be grateful that he has placed it so squarely before us. He makes everything else seem irrelevant.

LIONEL KOCHAN

CHURCH, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS

THE POPES AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. By J. W. Poynter. pp. 101. Watts & Co. 7s. 6d.

CHURCH AND PEOPLE IN BRITAIN. By Archibald Robertson. pp. 169. Watts & Co. 7s. 6d.

Catholics get annoyed if the term Italian is applied to them, in fact they do not even like the expression Roman, which calls up memories of the Roman Empire, suggests something of multi-nationalism, if not universalism. The Catholic like the Communist claims to be above nation, but is there anything substantial in such claims apart from the will to universalism? In the first millennium A.D. the Roman Church provided the religion for what was for practical purposes a world in itself, but what of the rump of the Church to-day, confined as it is to Italy, Spain, some Balkan countries, and the South American states, with some adherents in other lands? It might even be described as the Mediterranean and Overseas Church did not that region contain the fringe of other religions such as the Greek Orthodox Church and Islam. These thoughts are prompted by a reading of J. W. Poynter's account of the Encyclical Letters, expressing the Papal mind on political, social and doctrinal questions. Considered as a whole these Encyclical Letters bring to mind the question of the relation of policy to environment. It is the lack of raw materials that makes Catholic theology and social policy what it is. Two hundred million tons of coal per annum and some iron ore for the Italian nation would revolutionize Catholic social policy and doctrine. Italy is a country with great traditions and much skill in her population, but poor, and the great majority of her people must be poor no matter what the type of government. This means that if her civilization is to

be maintained there must be marked inequality of income and status. True, it might be possible to do away with some of the receipts of idlers and others not contributing substantially to the community, but how far would such rake-offs go amongst 50 millions of people? There is bound to be a privileged minority, and privileged minorities are in varying degrees corrupt. The Church is bound to stand for privilege under the circumstances and fight hard to retain her participation in that which is available.

Roman Catholic politics reflect their Italian background. It is true that there is some representation of outside Catholics on policy-making bodies with the Roman Church, but very little. In the College of Cardinals the Italian representation far outweighs the representation of all other nations. Catholic policy is as much Italian as Communist is Russian. The constitution of the Church is authoritarian in character and the centre is everything. The adherents all over the world turn their eyes to the Pope in Rome and get but cursory glances in return. The Church in its early history was in the main concerrned with the collection of tribute, like the Empire it succeeded. When speaking of the Catholic Church as an Italian body, it must not be thought, however, that she identifies herself with the secular state; she has only one loyalty, to herself, but her thought and action are moulded by her background just as Communism is moulded by Russian conditions.

The Encyclical Letters reflect a vague sort of humanism. An incautious reader might gather that a progressive attitude on labour relations is adopted. Employers should treat their employees humanely, there is nothing positively evil in payment of good wages, but workers must remember that there is nothing evil in being poor. In the middle of the nineteenth century anything like workers' organizations caused a shiver to go down the papal spine; workers' organizations appalled the Vatican and some of them were probably appalling in those days, but later there was a toleration of workers' organizations as such and an attempt to use them for reactionary purposes. Workers' organizations were to be tolerated provided they had no teeth; demands could be made upon employers but there was to be no class struggle. Where possible special Catholic bodies were to be set up, a policy which would conveniently split and weaken the labour movement. The object of the Vatican is to bridge the gap between standards current in advanced countries and her own requirements and to give an appearance of being more

humane than she is. Sensitiveness to criticism both from within and without the Church fold that in her social outlook she is failing by the light of Christian ethics may partly account for this desire to put the best face possible on her social policy.

Archibald Robertson's *Church and People in Britain* is written in excellent narrative style and is very readable. The subject suits his mordant wit. Robertson cannot be described as unbiased in his attitude to the Church and no doubt would not leave uncovered any scandal he could find, but the story he unfolds of power politics, corruption, and chicanery is probably very little distortion of the reality. Robertson deals most exclusively with the power politics element and leaves alone the question of what effect Christian teaching and ethics had on thought and life. One wonders what difference there would have been had the Roman Empire not decayed and had the secular Roman state continued her task of tutelage and exploitation of Britain and the rest of the Empire.

Of course, the fact that the Roman Church was the inheritor of Roman civilization was much more important than the theology that she brought with her. For a country on the frontiers of civilization as was Britain in the first millennium A.D. the important factor for her future development was that she should be in association with the more technically-developed countries of the Continent. The Church was the garment that this intervention wore.

Apart from this benefit as the vehicle of technical culture, the benefit of the Church appears to lie in her forming a separate estate in the struggle for power, first in the form of a monolithic church struggling with the Kings, Barons and Merchants, and later after the splinter movement of the Reformation, followed by divers forms of dissent, by the production of a situation the only rational solution of which was toleration.

Robertson, caustic as he is about the Church, like many Marxists appears to retain Christian ethics as the basis of his judgments, else why his moral disapprobation of minorities looking after their own interests? M. L. BURNET

THE SEED OF THE CHURCH. By F. A. Lea. pp. 172. Sheppard Press. 10s. 6d.

In the eyes of the humanist the merit of this perceptive and well-written book is likely to be found in the skilful evocation and interweaving of the major themes that have made the modern

consciousness, rather than in the author's conclusion. The typical romantic autobiography is a sequence of three phases: the "glad animal spirits" of spontaneous youth; the long and painful reflective disease which sets in at adolescence; the difficult recovery and hard-won self-conscious personal integration of maturity. This is a wonderful (and genuine) example of the Hegelian dialectic, and Hegel's philosophy is a natural theology for the natural religious experience of the romantic, so authentic and personal. But it is esoteric, a revival of Gnosticism over against Christianity; and it revives the theological controversies and leads on to a generation of intolerant sects and wars. The revival inevitably refers us back to the past: to Gnosticism itself, the contrast of Hebrew and Hellenic experience and consciousness, their double fusion and their interfusion in St. Paul and St. Augustine; the massive synthesis, patient and wise, of St. Aquinas; the rationalist's probing of the documentary basis in modern times, and the romantic's freer handling of the material; the unflinching investigations and the new mythologies of Freud. Mr. Lea's treatment of these related themes is admirably succinct, confident and solid, and at the same time penetrating and sensitive; although it is fuller and better in dealing with the direct material of theological history than with the modern alternatives of Marx and Freud.

The flash confidence in progress which consigns history to the dustbin or stores it in museums is a folly that is fast dying out. But we still need to be reminded that the seemingly unintelligible and archaic past is still relevant because it is still being repeated and there is still much to be learned from it. There is no privilege in relation to the past; none is exempt: it is as important to rationalists who think that Christianity is an exploded myth, as to Christians who think that the truth is revealed and established for ever. These confident positions which dispense with history are built on sand. Worse, those who occupy such positions have no hope of understanding and respecting each other, no suspicion of their own weakness and the other's strength.

The conclusions which Mr. Lea reaches are Christian conclusions. He wants a Christianity chastened by history which has learned to hold fast to three fruits of experience: a Catholic moral authority is necessary which shall command the most scrupulous respect but not override conscience; a religion which loses its roots in practical activity and becomes esoteric and contemplative is not merely not a religion for the simple, but is false and estranged from itself; it is necessary to live in the world and not of it, to take history and the redemption of society seriously and at the same time believe in the other-worldly perfection of the individual who seeks

it. Mr. Lea quotes more than once Arthur Koestler: "Neither the saint nor the revolutionary can save us; only the synthesis of the two." It is not necessary to follow him to these conclusions to profit by the historical explorations which lead him there. But indeed his general conclusion deserves the most serious consideration of humanists: that the lessons of experience are unlikely to be learned and applied unless there is a catholic tradition in which is vested a conscious mastery of the past. H.J.B.

THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION. By Lord Raglan. pp. 133. The Thinkers' Library. Watts & Co. 2s. 6d.

Lord Raglan contests in this work the views of Fraser, Tylor, and other anthropologists who hold that religion is natural or instinctive and has its roots in the environment of primitive life, and argues, on the contrary, that religion is a manifestation of sophisticated man, a matter of culture, and once produced diffused widely over the world. The author produces a wealth of data to show parallelisms in ritual of a highly-involved character in many religions, primitive and advanced, new and old, which could not be the product of simple reactions to nature. In general outline the author's thesis bears a relation to the diffusionist school of anthropology of Elliot Smith, Rivers and their colleagues who traced civilization in general back to a single source. He finds the immaterial proceeds from the material, the first gods were men, deification in the after life coming later.

An argument both so close-knit and extensive provides much material for thought and reflection and will no doubt excite much interest in anthropological circles, and it is not possible to make quick judgments upon it. The work is a challenging one and on the face of it there is much to commend it. It is surely true that it is not the simple soul who is animistic but the poet or storyteller. To the simple-minded a tree is a tree, a log a log, and the sea a quantity of water. It is the poet who in an intensity of feeling for natural objects sees something, or likes to think that he sees something, more than the inert matter of which they are composed. The Greek Gods appear to be a creation of the literary mind, and it is noteworthy that those particularly concerned with religion and magic are the sophisticated, learned elements. The medicine-man is far from being a simple type, and the same is true of the priest. Learning and religion have always been bracketed together

and this even holds good to a considerable degree to-day in an age governed and conditioned by a science which has been divested of theology.

The deification of the king-ruler is a phenomeon which can be readily understood by reference to current experience. There has been a close approach to, if not actual, deification of a number of people in our own time; Mussolini, Hitler, Gandhi, Lenin, Stalin, and Churchill are some cases in point. It is interesting to note how near to deification is Churchill in spite of the fact of there being a well-established incorporeal deity in the field and of the fact that the two-party system of government provides the very reverse of a good atmosphere for such a proclivity to deify. There was much cause for gratitude and respect for Churchill for his many services to the public and particularly for his leadership in the perilous war years, but this does not account in full for the feeling that he inspires. There is a powerful desire in most men's minds to lean on someone and this is probably the root-cause of religion. In mediaeval times it was thought helpful merely to display the Bible where some infidelism abounded in order to ward off the evil that threatened, similarly, at critical times, such as an important by-election, Churchill is wheeled on to the scene to vanquish the evil forces, without any real attempt being made to calculate the actual effect that his appearance creates. In the same way the Children of Israel did not care very much what was the effect of their supplications to their god on the occasion of various military engagements or calamities; the calling on the god is a ritual.

Lord Raglan adheres to the theory that the kernel of all religions is ritual. Religion is the carrying out of ritual. He seeks to show the common ground of this ritual and its genesis in the East.

The tracing of religion to the sophisticated elements, or some of the sophisticated elements of society, will come as a shock to those who regard religion as a manifestation of ignorance and who hope that improved education will eradicate superstition. The fact is that religion is a matter dependent upon temperament and not knowledge. Religion, in the sense of ritual, is a product of temperamental immaturity and not of any intellectual deficiency. The I.Q. will never tell anything about religion. The clever man can be just as immature emotionally as the unsophisticated individual, or more so, and it may well be that civilization with its constant adventure into the unknown and the dangers attendant thereon will always produce those who require something to lean upon. Ritual somehow produces the illusion that there is something to lean upon.

M. L. BURNET

CORRESPONDENCE

Marxism, Past and Present

In your article under the above title in the January issue, while preserving a judicial balance for the most part, you tip the scale against Marxists by throwing in some assertions which seem to be demonstrably untrue. Near the beginning you say that Marxists "reckon against them all who are not wholly with them." Anyone who does this is a very bad Marxist, and would be "told off" by the Party for his sectarian attitude. Marx condemned it in advance. In the *Communist Manifesto* he disclaims founding a "party opposed to other working class parties." In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* he ridicules the notion that all classes except the working-class (e.g., the professional class, shopkeepers, or peasants) are "one reactionary mass." Lenin in *Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder,* insists on the duty of Communists to "live in harmony" with "small commodity producers" who "cannot be driven out or crushed," but *can* be "remoulded and re-educated . . . by very prolonged, slow, cautious organisational work"; on the necessity of building Socialism "with the material bequeathed us by capitalism"; on the obligation of Communists not to "fence themselves off" by slogans, but to "talk to the people, not in scientific language . . . but everywhere to rouse the thoughts of the masses and draw them into the struggle." Stalin, in the speech *Dizzy with Success,* rebuked his own hotheads and insisted on the importance of winning the support of the majority of Russian peasants. How unlike all this is to the vulgar caricature of the Communist as a conspirator with a knife between his teeth, plotting to stab his friends in the back for the sake of personal power and advantage!

In your criticism of Marxist philosophy you complain that Marxists burke the epistemological question. They do not burke it: they point out that the whole business about "our knowledge of the external world" arises from a severing of theory from practice. In Engels' words, "human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it." Marxism is empiricism, but a radical empiricism that does not sit in an armchair waiting for experience to turn up, but puts its beliefs to the test of trial and error. As one who went (forty-six years ago!) through the mill of "Greats" and spent years of my life trying to "vindicate" scientific knowledge by idealistic juggling, I can speak from experience of the release and relief when I found, in middle age, that Marx and Engels (unbeknown to my teachers) had cut the Gordian knot

for me before I was born and rendered all this scholasticism unnecessary.

You suggest that Marx thought the transition to Socialism would be "as easy as inevitable." He said it was inevitable, but he never said it would be easy. On the contrary, he rebuked his own facile Leftists for this very mistake. "You have got to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and national wars not merely in order to change your conditions, but in order to change yourselves and become qualified for political power." That is not an easy-going gospel.

You say that Marxism claims to be "scientifically exact," that it refuses to be "changed by action," and that this renders it "utterly and wickedly irresponsible," "not true and not honest," "impudent, mischievous and destructive." Dear me! It is surprising that the same people who challenge Marxism as a "rigid dogma" attack the Soviets for "betraying the revolution" when they adapt their application of Marxism to varying circumstances. As a matter of fact Marx and Engels never pretended that their theory was "scientificlly exact" in the sense that, for example, mathematics is. No one was more severe than Marx on those who "tried to prescribe" to a class movement "according to a certain dogmatic recipe," or who treated his historic materialism as a "super-historical, universal passport." No one insisted more strongly than Engels that dialectical materialism was empirical or nothing—not a prescription from our inner consciousness of the course facts had to follow, but a "reflection of the actual development which is fulfilled in the world of nature." "The thing immediately to be done," wrote Marx, "depends entirely on the given historical conditions in which one has to act." And the very "zig-zags" with which Communists are reproached show how far they have digested this lesson.

No, sir, your arrow misses the target.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

Mr. Blackham can rely upon the agreement of Marxists that there is every reason for seriously examining again and again the Marxist case. They will even go some part of the way with him in his account of the materialist conception of history and of Marxian economics, but they will certainly dispute, not only his conclusions, but most of what he says in other sections of his article.

They will deny, to begin with, that Marxists "reckon against them all who are not wholly with them." The Marxist policy, on the contrary, has been, from the beginning, to unite against the

exploiting capitalist class, all sections of society, which for any reason are prepared to join in the struggle. If, however, Mr. Blackham's dictum is meant to apply only to the theoretic field, it is certainly true. Marxists argue not only against non-Marxists but against all who deviate from Marxism even in a minor degree. But then the same is true of all theoretical discussion. If I am convinced that two and two make four, I shall never agree with anybody who makes the sum even the smallest of fractions more or less. One of the impressions I gather from Mr. Blackham's essay is that he finds the necessity of clear cut decision, even in the field of theory, almost deplorable, and that this attitude affects his view of Communist theory and practice.

Mr. Blackham says, for instance, that "there is very good reason for holding the doctrine of dialectical materialism, but there is no philosophical reason for supposing that it destroys the plausibility and finally disposes of every alternative." But even Mr. Blackham cannot have it both ways. Materialism, he tells us himself, is the primacy of nature in relation to mind, which is dependent on our bodies and particularly on our brains. Natural science tells us that the earth existed millions of years before men could have lived upon it. It is impossible to get rid, even for a moment, of the certainty that things and other people exist apart from our sensations about them. There is no question of "proving" this. It is itself more indubitable than any conceivable demonstration could make it. Hence, materialism was the fundamental certainty of life long before reflection and the development of language created the possibility of any alternative philosophy. Dialectical materialists do not have to "seal off" any idealistic past. They merely expose the fallacies upon which the (purely verbal) philosophies of idealism have been constructed, which involves no attempt to refute the the irrefutable. It was for Lenin in particular, a political task of primary importance to dissociate Marxism from all theories which denied or obscured the primacy of nature. If nature is primary there is no place for epistemologies which make it dependent upon mind, however uncomfortable that may be to eclectic souls who like to "Keep open contacts and continuity with other traditions."

It is surely a misuse of language to describe as "dogmatic" a belief of which no sane person can divest himself even for five minutes, or its acceptance as "overriding" any epistemological question. "Dialectics," says Lenin, "includes what is now called the theory of cognition, or epistemology, or gnosology, a science that must contemplate its subject-matter in the same way—historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of cognition, the transition from *non* consciousness to consciousness." There

was therefore no need for Lenin to show epistemologists as having been "beaten on their own ground in a sham fight"; and it is evident that his supposed "ineptitude" in dealing with idealistic epistemologists is really Mr. Blackham's misapprehension as to what the question in dispute really was.

"Men make their own history," said Marx, "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted by the past." This is in harmony with common sense and with our ordinary conception of ourselves as free agents. Mr. Blackham's exposition, though contradictory, conveys the dominant impression that man is, in Marxist theory, much more of a spectator than a master of his fate. "What happens," he explains, is (according to Marxism) "predetermined and predictable, not because it is purposed by man or God, but because the nature of the interacting entities and their conditions are determinate and relatively stable and may be known." What happens in history is surely not predetermined for man, who, as he gains more control over nature, has an ever-growing influence on events. If it were otherwise, man could not be said to make his own history. And what happens is, as we know, far from being predictable, owing to continuous change in the factors of history and their multiplicity. It is possible to venture some predictions of a general character with more or less assurance, such as the probability of a slump, or a war, but not without presupposing the conscious and voluntary action of masses of men.

"The Marxist," according to Mr. Blackham, "does not say: 'I know what I want and how I am going to get it'." But is not that precisely what he does say, not of course, as an individual but as an organised Party? He wants to abolish capitalist exploitation and build a socialist society; and the history of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. shows how he set about the job in one set of circumstances. In Mr. Blackham's view all he can say is: "I know what is going to happen and that it will be good; therefore I know what to do." This is patently not Marxist and is not even rational. The Communists of Germany knew pretty well what was going to happen in 1933 when Hitler came to power, but they were quite sure it would not be good.

It is, again, very misleading, I submit, to say that Marx and Engels "contemptuously reject and spit upon ethical ideals." I see no excuse for it except the insufficient one that they did not operate with hollow abstractions such as "Justice," "Freedom," etc., with unspecified and ever-changing content. Their vision of the future

is what is usually called an ethical ideal. Mr. Blackham calls it a grand vision and says that none has been so near the truth. He even declares that "their total vision of history is the most serious call to a devoted life imaginable." I must leave Mr. Blackham to disentangle his own thoughts on this essential feature of Marxism.

And I think he has still to struggle for consistency and clarity as to whether Marxists have, or have not, a social programme. He states more than once that "Marxism is not a social programme, but also that "the programme is there and is all-important to Marxism." "The social programme (of Marxism) is not described and is not an object of will," he strangely asserts. As if it were not well known that the programme consists broadly in the realisation of the vision of Marx, which Mr. Blackham admires, and is an "object of will" for Communist parties wherever they exist. I think it can fairly be said that no parties have such precise plans for the future, immediate and more remote, as the Marxist parties. Who does not know that they envisage a classless society in which each citizen freely gives according to his powers and receives according to his needs and in which the State, as an organ of coercion, will wither away because the necessity of coercion has been left behind.

It is in virtue of this conception of society that Communists can claim to be the truest humanists, and it is not unusual to-day for Christian idealists to see profound affinities between their own aims and those of Communism. But such aims would remain utopian without two conditions: their economic feasibility and the capacity of the working class to achieve them by political action. Although Mr. Blackham concedes that Marxism implies unity of thought and action, and that it is patronised by some people who do not take this central tenet seriously, I fear that he has not himself been sufficiently mindful of it; and indeed that if his own attitude to Marxism cannot be called patronising, there is rather widespread misapprehension as to the meaning of this adjective.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that Mr. Blackham, after having convinced himself that Lenin was philosophically inept and that Stalin had vulgarised Marxism, should proceed to demonstrate the dialectical inadequacy of all other Marxists. Yet one cannot help being a little astonished to discover how grave that inadequacy is. "Marxists," we are told, "generalise from one or two (mainly one) large scale transformation of society, and apply the generalization to a prediction of a similar transformation to come in a situation, which in many or most characteristics is extremely dissimilar." Obviously, not much in the way of logic or even ordinary gumption

is to be expected from such people. But that is not their worst blunder. After having evolved and applied the doctrine of dialectical materialism, to which Mr. Blackham allows some merit, they have now abandoned it and use such notions as Capitalism, the State, etc., "absolutely as logical concepts of substances and their necessary attributes: historical characteristics and tendencies of these phenomena are treated as propria of substances, belonging to them by definition without any need to look again." "This," he explains, rather unnecessarily except, of course, for Marxists, "is a return to Aristotelian metaphysics, of which dialectical materialism is a repudiation." Thus all Marxists, for Mr. Blackham makes no exceptions, are sent to the bottom of the class. Indeed, if his account is correct, they should be put outside as totally unteachable. Because it appears they have exchanged a progressive philosophy for a reactionary one out of pure cussedness. "It is useless to pretend," says Mr. Blackham, obviously more in sorrow than in anger, "that it might be corrigible intellectual error when manifestly it is implacable will." Plain speaking is needed here and we get it. "Marxism in this way shows that it is not true and it is not honest; it is doubly false: intellectually and ethically, objectively and subjectively." Yet even here Mr. Blackham's natural kindness shines through in a numerical understatement. He could have said "quadruply" instead of "doubly." But even his patience must sometime be exhausted, and he feels bound to declare that "there is every excuse for those who take Communism not merely as the enemy, but as unmitigated barbarism, indistinguishable from Fascism." There is every excuse, then, for Mr. Churchill and the most violent enemies of socialism in treating the only Socialist State, because it has a Communist government, as an enemy of culture. Mr. Blackham, after some inconsistencies and hesitations, thus comes down at last firmly on the side of the angels!

The Marxism of to-day is not a final doctrine or a system; it is a method of approach to nature and history based on experience so far. In order to remain adequate it must be continually adjusted to new discoveries and new experience, and criticism of it will ever be necessary. But I cannot feel that Mr. Blackham's has been realistic or that his judgments are to be taken very seriously. Indeed, he may himself feel, on reflection, rather like Baron Munchausen, when he contemplates his own feat of putting all Marxists in the pillory single-handed as enemies of civilization, with dunces' caps on their heads. He may even come to doubt, in view of the

mighty events unrolling in our time, whether, in adding his voice to the Anti-Soviet chorus, he has really advanced the human cause.

JOHN MURPHY

(In these letters from my two critics I can find no point of any substance whatever to which I had not already given due consideration before I wrote my previous article. I am tempted to show this in detail, but, having written a long second article in this issue, I forbear and leave interested readers to judge for themselves.—H.J.B.)

Industrial Democracy

May I put forward a few suggestions, arising partly from your commentary in the January issue, partly out of an attempt last year to bring together all the arguments in the series of articles on the profit motive in industry.

First, divergence of interest between management and labour is not inevitable and need not be assumed, and I shall class as "labour" all employees, including management. Secondly, for simplicity, the limited company form of business unit is adopted as the type.

Accepting the profit motive as alone at the present time of general, almost universal, efficacy in industry, a profit and control sharing system might be devised to satisfy economic requirements (the directing of capital and labour most efficiently into the most useful channels) and political feeling (the safeguarding of personal freedom and of class interests).

Instead of a share of profit being conceded to labour by capital, as in existing profit-sharing schemes, a legal right could be established by statute. A new Companies Act would provide, briefly, as follows:

After charging basic remuneration for labour, in accordance with a national scale (minimum wage rates already provide a starting point for this), and for capital (interest), profits would be divided, according to a formula laid down, among the three interested groups—labour (employees), capital (shareholders), and the State (taxation).

Control similarly could be shared between representatives of employees and shareholders, with recourse to State or other arbitration (the auditor perhaps). It might be laid down that only

persons qualified for management would be eligible for office, although the profit motive would probably, in the long run, ensure that employees would choose capable representatives.

With regard to those State-run enterprises whose profits are not limited by competition, it is suggested that, so far as possible, instead of revenue (profits) being fixed, as in the case of the Railways, the charge to the public (or selling price) should be fixed, by suitable tribunal, so that profits can only be increased by reducing costs, and the profit motive serve to increase efficiency.

I have made no attempt, within the scope of a letter, to work out a detailed "National Plan,"' but that could be done (by expert planners) and might merit the attention of any of the political parties now seeking an election programme.

In conclusion perhaps it should be pointed out that a uniform system does not in this case involve regimentation of persons. Direction of labour would not be more necessary. The need for it might well be reduced.

J. W. MATTHEWS

NOTE: Mrs. Krook's article, *Mr. Eliot's Cold Heart,* would have been contributed to *The Free Mind,* but publication of that journal having been discontinued, the editors suggested the author should submit it to *The Plain View.*

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